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## **SEA SCAMPS**



# SEA SCAMPS

THREE ADVENTURERS OF  
THE EAST

*By*

*Henry C. Rowland*



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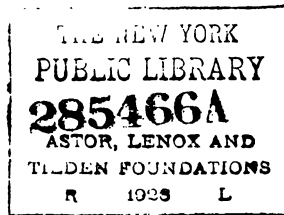
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Published, September, 1903

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*To*

GRACE HUBBELL ROWLAND







## SEA SCAMPS



BACK TRACKS

THE ship was one mass of incongruities from stem to stern. To begin with, she wore the red, white, and blue of Uncle Sam's Quartermaster's Department on her two big buff funnels and flew the British Ensign. Then her captain wasn't a captain at all, but only the navigating officer, and the real captain was an army man who didn't know the lazarette from the foretop. The snore of the trades through her rigging mingled with barnyard sounds from the 'tween decks, and when the bosun called "all the starboard watch" the mules made such a racket that the pipe was drowned.

Also, we were cursed with captains. There was an army surgeon with the rank of captain who got peevish if anybody called him "doctor," though why I'm sure I don't know. I took the trouble to point out to him that his President could make any silly ass a captain in a day, but that it took time, money, and in some cases brains to make him a doctor. In addition, we had a naval captain, Uncle Sam's Navy, then



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our captain-quartermaster, and a few Volunteer captains whom some of the privates called by their Christian names, and last, and, as far as I could make out, least, the original captain of the ship, who had his certificate from the British Board of Trade and carried the responsibility of the ship upon his shoulders.

I had been a surgeon in the line before the ship was chartered to the Americans, and, in some peculiar way, was transferred to Uncle Sam's army for service on the transport by signing a contract for a month and taking an oath which, as far as I could discover, was for the same length of time as the contract. Thereafter I was directed to buy a uniform in which I was promptly addressed as "Lieutenant," which struck me as being rather an Irish promotion, having once previously served as major—but that has nothing to do with this yarn. All things considered, our old floating stockyard and her complement were about as odd a jumble as I was ever shipmates with.

The greatest incongruity of the whole outfit was that of the ship's captain and his first mate. The captain was an ex-Royal Navy officer of the frequent bluff, beefy, sea-going type, with a voice like a sea-lion and a hand like the fluke of a whale. He came

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of a good old county family and was probably the black sheep of the lot. I knew something of his people and had heard some queer stories of how he was kicked out of the service for some crooked work that wouldn't stand inspection, backed up by brutality and general caddishness. He no doubt owed his present billet to sheer force of vitality at sea, supplemented by boot-licking ashore. On the transport he managed to keep his position pretty solid by cursing out everyone beneath him and currying favour with every dummy that had a bit of gold lace stitched to the collar of his blouse.

The mate, on the other hand, impressed me as being the mongrel strain of two fine breeds. It was not easy to form an idea of what nationality he belonged to. One instinctively felt him to be a type, without being able to say of what. Some thought that he was an Egyptian, others a Mongol, a few sized him up as a "down East" Yankee. Whatever he might be, he certainly possessed all of the earmarks of a gentleman, both in appearance and behaviour. I never knew of but one person that gauged him correctly for what he was, and that was myself.

To one who had made the study of anthropology

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that I had, the man was absorbingly interesting, both mentally and physically. He stood about six feet in height and might have weighed 175 pounds. His head was rather long in the antero-posterior diameters, well planted on a firm, rounded neck, his shoulders disproportionately broad, and his chest unusually arched and full, but the most remarkable thing about his figure was the extreme smallness of his waist and narrowness of hips. I saw him several times early in the morning taking a bath under the deck hose, and noticed that, when standing naturally, his arms hung well clear of his hips, reminding one of the figures of the men pictured in Egyptian hieroglyphics. When one got a side view of him, however, one was struck by the depth of the muscles of waist and thigh. His legs were all ankle until almost to the knee, when they suddenly bulged into round knotted bunches of muscle. In fact, the man's whole figure reminded me of the anatomical drawings illustrating the muscular system.

His face was the most sinister that I have ever seen on any man, savage or civilised. The hair, straight, coarse, and black, typically Indian, was brushed away from a brow broad and intelligent enough, but carved

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straight across without the slightest superciliary arch. Underneath a pair of heavy brows there shone a pair of cold metallic eyes as fierce and unblinking as an eagle's. They were of that stony grey often seen in the Gaelic tribes, and had a peculiarity seldom seen in man; that is, the "retinal reflex." In certain lights the expression of the eye suddenly became blank, and one got the flat red glint that we associate with the lower animals. The eyes themselves were set on the slightest suspicion of an upward slant, which effect may have been accentuated by a pair of high, prominent cheek-bones. His nose was aquiline and keenly chiselled, and his mouth, thin-lipped and compressed, was cut straight across his face like a gash.

The man's actions were as striking as his appearance. He seemed incapable of slowness or deliberation. Once I saw him reach for a loose roll of marlin-stuff that was lying on the deck, at the same time that one of the sailors stooped to pick it up. The rope was off the deck, thrown into the bosun's chest near by, and McKim on his way aft before the sailor had straightened his back again.

One could see at a glance that the transport captain hated the sight of the mate, having no doubt the

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usual British Navy suspicion and dislike of anything that acted independently and of its own volition. The captain was forever growling and fault-finding, and I often wondered just what effect it had upon the mate, for his face was as immobile as a mask, and he would simply salute and get to work to remedy the matter. The clash, which I plainly saw was imminent, came at last, and in a most remarkable manner.

The captain was just finishing his morning inspection of the ship, made in company with the quartermaster, captain-doctor, and aides. As they came through the forward alleyway to reach the deck he noticed a small puddle of water formed by the condensation of the moisture on a waterpipe overhead.

The mate was standing by the starboard bitts at the foot of the companionway leading to the deck above.

"Mr. McKim!" growled the captain. The mate was at his side in three quick steps.

"Why don't you keep the water off the deck? What d'ye think this is—a fishin' smack or a Sound coaster?"

"You don't want the pipe parcelled, so it can't be helped, sir," replied the mate. He said "can't" with

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the broad Maine accent. "The pipe's cold and the air's hot, so the water's bound to condense!"

"Ho!—very interestin'!" sneered the captain. "Well, mister mate, I want to tell ye that it *will* be helped, by —, or the deck 'll be gettin' as rotten as the crew! Get out the way!"

He stepped across the puddle, and the mate leaned back against the bulkhead to give him room to pass. Whether it was by accident or design I do not know, although I suspect the latter, but the burly brute of a skipper, although the ship was steady and there was plenty of room, deliberately planted his great heavy-soled boot on the mate's instep, at the same time brushing him roughly with his elbow.

I heard a low soft gurgle,—the sound of a cat when stroked,—and saw the mate's hands flash up to the captain's waist, just above the belt. It simply looked as though he had grasped him instinctively to take the weight from off his foot, but the next instant there was a bellow of pain and fright that fairly shook the deck, and the captain came lurching through the door and reeled over against the rail. The high colour had left his face, and it was drawn and tense.

"My God!" he gasped; "my God!"

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I turned to him instantly, and noticed that his shirt on both sides of his body was blood-soaked. I glanced for a moment toward the mate; his hands were hanging empty at his sides, and his face was expressionless, but just for an instant I caught the flat red gleam in both eyes. The captain was getting paler, and the perspiration stood out on his face in beads. I pulled up his shirt and to my astonishment found not the cut that I expected, but a great semi-circular tear through skin and adipose. The mate had torn the flesh apart with his hands!

No one seemed to know just what course to take in the matter. The action was so grotesquely inhuman that it didn't seem to fall under any definite jurisdiction, so the captain-quartermaster decided to let the matter drop until we reached Manila and then ship a mate more canny in his actions.

The next day I was leaning on the rail watching the little flying fish spattering out under the bows when I was conscious of a light tread behind me. I looked over my shoulder and saw McKim.

"Good-morning," I remarked casually. I was intensely interested in the man, but felt instinctively that to betray it would be to fog the plate.

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"Good-morning, Doctor Boles," he answered. He paused a moment, then remarked suddenly, "You saw me lose my temper with the captain yesterday?"

"Yes," I said; "you have a strong grip, McKim. I've seen some queer wounds in my time, but never one made in that way."

"What do you think they'll do about it?" he asked.

"I think you'll lose your billet," I answered.

"I don't care for that," said he. "All I wanted was to get out here."

"What are you going to do?" I asked carelessly.

"Get a little vessel and trade around the islands. I can buy a fifty-ton brig out here for five thousand." He regarded me silently for a few minutes.

"Doctor," he said, "I don't know why a man of your age, and an Englishman at that, should want to come out to this God-forsaken place as an acting-assistant surgeon in the army. There's no money in it and not much glory." There was a bit of a sneer on his face as he said this.

"Now I've got a proposition to make. I want another man to go in with me on this trading scheme. There is no end of money in it. I've made two trips



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out here before and know what I'm talking about. Do you know anything about a ship?"

"A little," I said.

"When will your time be up?" he asked.

"It's up now as far as that's concerned. My contract was only made for a month."

"Have you ever been in the East before?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered, "I once went out to China as a medical missionary. Now, I want to see the Filipinos. You ought to be interested in them yourself," I remarked, turning to him suddenly. "They're distant blood relations of yours."

His eyes narrowed. "What do you mean?"

"Haven't you got some Indian blood? North American, I mean?"

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I've studied racial peculiarities and see many points of similarity."

"You are right, doctor; my grandmother was a Tuscarora woman."

"And your grandfather?"

"A Scotch Puritan," he answered with a slight smile. "Queer combination, wasn't it? I was

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brought up among the Indians until I was twelve years old, and then I was sent to my cousin's people in Maine."

"And went to sea with the fishing-fleet. Summer on the banks and winter on the farm?" I added.

"How do you know that?"

"Partly because everyone there's a fisherman, partly from the way you hold your hands."

"Right again, doctor; but let me tell you more about my trading scheme."

He explained the idea with so much clearness and certainty that I began to get interested, and before he had finished I was about as enthusiastic as a man can be who has made a failure of everything he has tried from boyhood to his fortieth year. The outcome of it was that I decided to go into it with him; he to be master of the vessel with a three-quarter interest, and I as mate with a quarter's. The proceeds would be shared on that ratio.

When we reached Manila McKim was informed that his services were no longer required, as I had foreseen. I had rather more difficulty than I expected in getting my contract annulled, and was, in fact, subjected to considerable criticism for leaving

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the service right upon arriving on the scene of action. But I had gotten past the age when sentiment counted for much, and I was sick and tired of taking orders from everyone in sight, anyway ; so I simply demanded that my contract be annulled, and in due time was successful.

McKim came in to see me almost every day. Most of his time was spent along the Pasig and paddling around inside the breakwater looking for a suitable vessel at a reasonable price. Until my contract was annulled I was occupied with my duties in the First Reserve Hospital, where I had been temporarily assigned. One day I met him on the Escolta talking to a Spanish mestizo who seemed greatly excited.

“ Good-morning, doctor,” he remarked in Spanish. “ Señor Valdez,” turning to the mestizo, “ permit me to introduce my partner, Doctor Boles. Señor Valdez,” he continued to me, “ owns a vessel that I think might answer our purpose were it not for the sad fact that some of her frames and part of her keel are badly burned as the result of a fire that broke out in her cargo a few months ago.”

“ *Madre di Dios*, the señor captain is mistaken. The fire occurred three years ago ; the muchacho lied.

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He does not know what he is talking about; and the timbers are in no way injured, simply scorched and blackened, in fact, rendered stronger from the hardening effect of the heat, and her bottom is but newly coppered."

"Probably because she got so worm-eaten that she wouldn't float without," remarked McKim. "That's the trouble. These tubs are all copper-sheathed, of course, or they'd be eaten right up in these waters, and that copper costs. Let's go down and look at her," he added, turning to me.

We jumped into a passing *carimita* and jolted across the Bridge of Spain, over through the Walled City, and pulled up at the "cut-off" that runs from behind the breakwater into the river. There we got a banca and paddled out to look at the *Purissima Concepcion*, Valdez' little brig, that was lying in the inner basin. She was an ungraceful, chunky little tub, of about forty tons, not exactly pot-bellied; she didn't have shape enough for that, but straight-waisted and chopped off, like the first effort of a small boy trying a new knife. Her bluff bows and slender black bowsprit reminded me of a pug-nosed girl with a slate pencil in her mouth, and she had a stern like

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a bull-pup. She was brig-rigged, and sparred from the tough "Nampan" wood, which partly accounted for her clumsy appearance, as the stuff is so strong and heavy that the spars are cut down to what seems a ridiculous lightness. There was no attempt at any sheer; in fact she looked a little hogged, and as we pulled up under her counter I noticed that she was pieced in the side, although the seams had been carefully puttied and painted, and just at that place the curve of her bilge was a trifle too abrupt.

"Her first two after frames are gone," I remarked to McKim; "look at that sag." It was just a guess on my part, of course, but it turned out to be about right, as when we went below we found that three of the frames on her starboard side were burned clear through. However, that was easily remedied, although we made Valdez, who wasn't much of a sailor, but had simply bought the hooker at a bargain on speculation, think that the circumstance ruined her absolutely. We persuaded him that if she was to go to sea in that condition, the first big wave that struck her would break her clean in two, and we hinted that perhaps it was our duty to report the matter to the captain of the port and have her condemned. Before

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we got through with him he was overjoyed to let us have her at our own price, which was fair enough, and we made him throw in an extra anchor and two hundred fathoms of three-inch coir hawser. Valdez was a "compradore," and had a shop down on the canal that runs up from the river under the *Puente del General Blanco*.

The following day McKim shipped a native crew, three Tagals and two Visayans, Ilo Ilo men, who afterwards turned out to be brave, devoted servants. Our idea was to run down among the southern islands of the Archipelago and try to pick up a cargo of hemp and tobacco, especially the former, as the war had put the price 'way up. Many of the ports were still closed, but natives can be induced to run cargoes off at night, and besides there were the pearls and copra to consider. I was strongly in favour of a trip to Sydney or Melbourne after a load of trading junk, calico prints, condemned cutlery, and stuff of that sort, knowing how much the natives preferred these things to money. But McKim seemed to think there was more in getting our hands on all of the loose hemp around the islands.

A week later we had got our craft in pretty good

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sea-going shape. I had the cabin aft slightly remodelled and made very comfortable. Some Chino carpenters had been strengthening the burned portions, replacing some of the teak frames, and fishing others in weak spots. One afternoon I was superintending the work as McKim was ashore haggling with Valdez about stores, when I saw a banca coming alongside. Under the awning sat the biggest, fattest Chinaman I ever saw. As he seemed to want to come aboard I called to one of the crew to drop the ladder for him. With amazing activity for a man of his size he came up over the side and stood smiling at me placidly. It was easy to see that he was a person of some consequence, both from his brisket, for only a wealthy Chinaman grows really fat, and from the richness and care with which he was dressed. On his head was the usual mandarin cap with its Turk's-head button, and his queue, which was spliced out at the end with black silk, barely brushed the deck. His tunic was of silk, richly embroidered around the corners and fastened pajama-like with buttons of carved antique ivory. Over his trousers he wore the divided silk overalls usually affected by the better class of Chinamen.

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"Good-afternoon," I remarked in Spanish. He answered fluently in the same tongue.

"Is this Mr. McKim?" he added.

"No," said I; "he's ashore, but he'll be back soon. Come under the awning and sit down."

At first he started to pump me about our plans, but I cut him short, gave him a cigar, and went on about my work. In about an hour McKim came aboard.

"Who's that chap?" he asked.

"Some Chinese compradore, I expect," said I. "Seems to be quite a swell in his way. Probably wants to sell us a few extra kegs of nails. Looks as if we might need 'em before we get back, too." I pushed a sprung piece of deck planking back into place with my heel. McKim walked aft. A few minutes later he called me. •

"Come here, will you, doctor. This gentleman," said McKim in Spanish, indicating me, "is my partner, and whatever I do must be done with his consent. Will you please state the proposition to him?"

The big Chinaman looked at me with twinkling eyes; one would have sworn that he was about to tell a funny story.

"I have just been telling Mr. McKim," he said in



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very good Spanish, "that I wish to charter your vessel to carry a cargo for me from Hai Chin."

"Where is that?" I asked.

"Ten miles up the Hai Chin River."

"What is the cargo?" said I, though I knew what was coming.

"Opium."

"And where is it to be landed?"

"Here; but I will attend to that myself. You will run no risk whatever."

"And we are to keep our mouths shut."

"That is, of course, understood—your own interests would demand it."

I looked at the old scoundrel in admiration. He was willing to trust European honesty to bring a valuable cargo across the China Sea, and was consistent enough to see that it would not do to try and persuade us to run it for him. But our being silent accessories of this act of smuggling did not seem to occur to him as crooked. In his Oriental code of ethics there could be no dishonesty where there was no risk of punishment. I looked at McKim. His face was as expressionless as the Chinaman's. Then I turned to the latter.

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"How large a cargo?" I asked.

"Altogether, including a few bales of silk, about what you could load into a casco."

"And the compensation?"

"Two thousand pesos."

I shrugged my shoulders disdainfully.

"I have lived in China for many years," I said, "and I know the danger of loading a cargo of opium; also of getting it away from that part of the coast. The place you speak of being shallow and dangerous and full of pirates, we risk losing our brig, and, as you know, our lives as well!" I caught McKim's eye.

"What do you think of it?" he asked in English.

"It's worth while," I answered, "and he will give us ten thousand; let's do it."

McKim's sinister face almost beamed.

"Good," he said; "I thought you wouldn't be foolish about it. You see we don't have anything to do with landing the stuff. And it isn't smuggling."

"Yes it is," said I, "and I don't give a hang if it is. If I can make a dollar without breaking God's commandments I'll do it. The devil for those made by fool legislators!" I turned to the Chinaman.

"We won't take a peseta less than ten thousand

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pesos," I said, "and if you try to beat us down, we'll raise our price."

The Chinaman still smiled and his eyes twinkled merrily.

"It is a bargain," he said; "do you want an agreement signed?"

"Oh, no," said I, "it's not necessary, but we want the money before we transfer the cargo to your lighters."

"Very well, you shall have it. Now, if you will come to my office to-morrow morning I will give you all the necessary information."

"One moment," said McKim. "How is it that you dare entrust such a valuable cargo to strangers and foreigners?"

The Chinaman smiled joyously and emitted a few happy little chuckles.

"I cannot go myself," he said; "it is necessary to trust someone, and I have found that white men of the better class are honest. Besides, there will be more cargoes to carry!"

The following day we went over to Manila and saw our patron. He explained in detail what was required of us, at the same time giving suggestions as

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to the easiest way of accomplishing the undertaking. It was easy to see that the thing had been done before, and not to his satisfaction. We were to clear in ballast for the open ports of the southern islands, ostensibly after a general cargo of rice, tobacco, coffee, hemp, sugar, etc., and, once clear of the land, were to make all haste across the China Sea, run into the estuary of the Hai Chin River, and drop anchor. Then we were to charter a boatman to take a letter about twenty miles up the river to a place called Wai Fu, lying in the foothills of the Yan Chin Mountains. The following night a small junk would come alongside from which we would transfer our cargo. On our way back we were to call at Cebu, where a general cargo would be quickly put aboard. Then we were to break out the hemp and bale it up around the opium and silk. If there were any questions about the time it took us to go from Manila to Cebu we were to answer that we had got aground and sprung a leak, so that it was necessary to beach her for repairs. This story the appearance of our craft would amply justify.

Our patron promised us that there would be no risk to us, as he would give us an order duly made out

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to carry his cargo, of which, of course, we would not be expected to know any more than its general appearance seemed to justify, from Cebu to Manila. Once anchored in Manila Bay the whole work of discharging would be taken by him, and all it would be necessary for us to do would be to show him the manifest signed by his Chinese partner and receive our pay. The whole trip should not take over six weeks.

Three days later we sailed. Much to my surprise the *Purissima* proved to be a fairly good traveller, and it was truly a marvel the way the old coffin would get to windward. McKim had made a few alterations in her rig and had given her a tremendous fore-and-aft mainsail, which made her something between a brigantine and a hermaphrodite brig. It had a queer look, but it helped her wonderfully in getting up into the wind. Our crew turned out very well. They all bunked forward, of course, and seemed to get on peacefully enough. McKim had the starboard watch with the two Tagals, and I the port with the Visayans. The odd man cooked.

Once clear of Corregidor we struck the northeast monsoon, which blows steadily at that time of year, so we were able to make one leg of it across, and on the

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seventh day we sighted the southern island of Pratas that lay about 150 miles from the China coast. There we caught a slant that headed us, so we had to beat in, and it was three days later before we entered the bay, and with nothing but a forestaysail and a scrap of our mainsail set stood cautiously up toward the river mouth. I had never heard of the place before, and what I had told our patron was simply an invention, but it turned out to be about correct.

An incident had occurred on our way across that I must not forget. On the morning of the second day out McKim came on deck to relieve me at eight bells, and before I went below to get my breakfast he dipped up a bucket of water from over the side and threw off his clothes for a bath. I was watching him casually, for his quick, lithe motions always had a fascination for me, and I noticed around his neck a sort of rosary, which when I observed more closely seemed to be a diminutive imitation of those peculiar ancient rosaries that have frequently been found in use in China, Thibet, North America, and old Mexico. I believe they have also been dug up with the relics unearthed from the ancient tumuli of the mound builders.

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"Why do you wear that thing, McKim?" I asked. He flushed and then looked rather vexed.

"It belonged to my grandmother," he answered shortly. "It is an amulet. Here, boy, throw that water over me," he added, turning to one of the sailors.

I saw that he was touchy about the thing, so I made no further comment, but went below.

The little bay where we dropped anchor was a fine harbour, land-locked on all sides by high, bold, rounded hills, naked of vegetation and studded with great black granite boulders; a wild, desolate place, and uninhabited except for a few fishermen's huts on the shore. We got ahold of a couple of coolies who came out in a sailing sampan, and after much haranguing, for their dialect was different from any that I had encountered in my missionary work, made them understand what we wanted, and that there would be twice the amount of money paid them when they returned. Our patron's agent was to send us back a scrap of paper bearing a character of which we held the duplicate, to indicate that our message had been received.

The following day the messengers returned, so I

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got everything in readiness to receive our cargo. The silk was to go down in the forepeak under some extra sails, and the opium under a false flooring beneath our cabin. I had seen enough of Chinese character not to trust it too far, so I got out my Colt's revolver and carefully oiled and loaded it, getting McKim to do the same. Then I armed the sailors with heavy knives that I had secured before leaving Manila, and cautioned them against turning their backs on the crew of the dhow.

The night came down dark and murky, and blotted out the shore line except where here and there the shoulder of some great overhanging hill loomed blackly against the sombre sky. The water was dead and dismal. Not a ripple nor a flicker of phosphorescence came from the sea, though now and then I felt the puff of a chilly land breeze, smelling of moist earth and rotting seaweed. I was leaning on the rail trying to cheer myself with a reflective pipe, for my spirits were very low, and thinking of the altered conditions between my first and second trips to China: the first as a missionary, the second as a smuggler.

Suddenly I caught the faint "chunk-a-chunk" that the great stern sculling oar of a freight sampan



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makes upon its thole pin. I called McKim, who came up through the companionway buckling on his gun. We listened together, and presently heard the soft "pat, pat," of naked feet as the coolies who were sculling the craft threw the weight first on one foot and then on the other. Our crew were gathered together forward in a little black huddled knot, and presently one of them crawled stealthily aft.

"What is it?" I asked in a whisper.

The man pointed his skinny arm into the darkness. Following the direction there suddenly resolved itself from the gloom a great square opacity that stood out against the denser darkness behind. It puzzled me at first, and then I made it out to be the big black sail of the dhow which had been hoisted to catch the fitful puffs of the night breeze.

Our anchor light was burning a dead yellow. I went below, and, lighting a powerful lantern we had got for the purpose, hoisted it on a halliard that I had reeved through a little block lashed to the spring-stay the day before. The light flared suddenly on the big sail of the dhow, that was now close aboard. A patter of muffled orders in a guttural voice came from her decks.

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"Hello," said I. "Stand by for a line."

"E-ee—yah—aa——" came a voice in answer.

I sent a heaving line uncoiling snakily through the darkness. It fell athwart her decks and in a moment we had her moored bow and stern. McKim dropped our sea ladder and immediately the crew of the dhow came swarming up. I couldn't see any use for more than the captain, so I shoved the rest of the mob back and hauled up the ladder. A light whip had been rigged from the main topsail-yard arm, and I ordered our crew to man it, and in a moment the bales and boxes came swinging over the side. No attempt was made to examine them, as we were simply to receive what was sent and receipt for the total number of pieces.

The Chinaman who had come aboard carried a piece of paper in his hand which he signified that he wanted signed. McKim carried it below. The Chinaman stood beside the hatch waiting for him to come up. I was busy tallying in the bales, the last of which was just coming aboard, but something, I don't know what, impelled me to watch that Chinaman out of the tail of my eye. And as I watched the bales with one eye and the man with the other, I saw his hand sud-

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denly slide down to his belt and caught the flash of the cargo light on naked steel.

"Look out, McKim!" I shouted.

A wild, eerie scream came in answer and a wave of dark, agile figures came pouring suddenly over the bow and stern. My gun was out in a flash, and I cut down on the man at the head of the companionway, who, with another scream even wilder than the first, lurched headlong into the scuppers. The next moment McKim was on deck, and together we leaped onto the deck house.

Up forward our sailors were fighting for their lives, and for a moment they stayed the rush from that direction, giving me time to reach under our dinghy, which we carried lashed bottom side up on the deck-house, and to slip out the heavy teak tiller which was shoved under the after thwart. It was well that I did so, for our revolvers were quickly emptied into the faces of the mob, and the next moment we were back to back fighting a blind and hopeless fight against overpowering odds.

McKim had got hold of a long iron capstan brake that he had torn from the hands of one of the assailants, and was lashing about him like a wildcat. I had

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thrown my empty revolver into a man's face, and gripping the tiller with both hands was getting in blow after blow as opportunity offered, parrying occasional thrusts as best I could. For what seemed a long time we beat them back as fast as they leapt up at us, then suddenly something heavy struck me in the chest, and over I went with a crash, and the next moment was almost suffocated in writhing, gripping forms, and remember with disgust the abominable stench of opium mingled with a nasty fishy smell that was overpowering. My arms were wrenched back until I thought that my shoulder blades would go, and turn after turn of thin bark twine was whipped around and cut deep into my wrists.

Although repeatedly struck and cuffed I did not lose consciousness, and the most distinct impression retained is that of McKim, the clothes torn away from the upper part of his body, a great gaping gash over his eye from which the blood spattered over his demoniacal face, which was working grotesquely in the dim, flickering light from the cargo lantern, and even at the time I was struck by the weird similarity of his face to those about him.

So quick were his actions that they seemed unable

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to reach him with any weapon; then suddenly some great object flew up from the crowd. There was the scrunching noise of iron on bone, and the next moment he was gone!

The fight was over, and almost immediately I heard the windlass in the bow going around and the chain hawser coming in. Vehement orders were frenziedly chattered in a fierce and constant flow of monosyllabics, and from what I was able to understand I gathered that a part of the gang were to take the brig immediately to sea. Everything about was clamorous confusion, yet with it all the work was purposeful. Some were frantically swinging aboard the remaining freight of the dhow; others ran nimbly aloft and shook out the sails, then slipped down and manned the halliards and braces, while all the while the "clank-clank" of the chain as it was snapped in through the hawse-pipe gave a sort of staccato time to the ebullition about the decks.

In the general confusion I appeared to have been overlooked, and lay bound and helpless where I had been dropped. Suddenly a shout came from forward, the clank of the hawser ceased, and the foretopsail be-

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gan to flap lazily. A louder order was shouted from the poop, and the crowd about the deck broke up, half of them hurrying to the side. Three men who were at the main-halliards belayed them where they were, and slipping to where I lay grabbed me roughly and started to drag me to the side. I supposed, of course, that I was going overboard, and had in fact become quite reconciled to the idea, and was trying to get a cold consolation from the sight of the prostrate bodies that lay about the deckhouse, but as I saw how many they were I began to fear that possibly there might be something warmer in store for me than the black waters of the bay.

They hauled me forward, as the dhow had drifted under the bows of the brig, for the land breeze had backed her fore-topsail and she was making stern-way. As I was dragged up over the bulwarks I caught a glimpse of one of our poor sailors, a Visayan named Manuel. He had been knifed from behind and had fallen back across the coaming of the fore-hatch. His head was twisted back, and his face shone pallid in the thin light, while his protruding eyeballs stared up into mine. From under his left chest a long kris dagger blade stuck six inches from

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his body, its wavy sides glinting snakily in the lamp-light.

I was hauled over the gunwale and dropped heavily into the bottom of the dhow, and a few seconds later McKim was laid alongside of me. He was unconscious and breathing stertorously, and I got my shoulder under his head and hauled a loose piece of matting up over him with my teeth, for the night was cold and his shirt had been torn to pieces.

A few final orders were shouted from the deck of the brig, which was already under way, and we cast off and headed up the river. I was beginning to feel dizzy and light-headed, for although I did not notice it at the time I had lost a good deal of blood from a long shallow slash where some beggar had wiped a knife across the front of my chest; perhaps I simply slept, but at any rate I have no recollection of the first part of the trip. When I finally awoke, or came to myself, the dawn had broken and I saw by the grey, early light that we were working up a winding stream which flowed sluggishly between irregular mountains of no great height which I judged to be the Yongsans—foothills of the Bohea Range that runs north-

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easterly from the north of Kwang Tung. We had probably been sculling by relays all night, but toward sunrise the breeze blew in from the sea, so the big square sail was hoisted and we made good sailing time.

The behaviour of our captors when they saw that I was awake and inclined to take an interest in things, rather surprised me. At first I was so stiff and sore that I could hardly move; my shoulders felt as if they were being racked, but my arms and hands were entirely devoid of all sensation. By squirming around a bit I managed to get in a sitting position. There was a Chinaman on either side of me, one smoking, and the other busy with a wooden bowl of rice and chopped greens. Although I knocked against them in my effort to rise they did not pay me the slightest attention, but a man who seemed to be a person of authority caught sight of me a few moments later, and said something to one of the men beside me, who drew his knife and cut the lashing around my wrists. I could, no doubt, have made myself understood, and was rather tempted to ask some questions, but decided to conceal what knowledge I had of their language in the hope of learning something of what was to hap-



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pen. A little later, however, a bowl of rice was handed me.

McKim was still unconscious, but his pulse was fairly good, and his breathing quiet and even. I did not feel much concern about him, as I had a sort of a notion that he might be in a better state than I was. Nevertheless I tore a piece from my shirt and, dipping it over the side, washed the blood away from his wounds and bound them up. No one seemed to take the slightest interest in the proceeding, and it even seemed to me that such glances as were thrown casually our way were strangely free from malice. Indeed, I knew enough of Chinese character to appreciate that in their utter selfishness such as had survived the fight of the night before were possibly gratified on the whole that we had lessened the number among whom the profits of the expedition were to be divided.

As we worked up the river it kept growing narrower and narrower, and sometimes it would loop so that it was necessary to clew up the sail and scull for a while in the direction whence we had come. We passed two towns, both of which were laid out on the same plan, and deserted. They were built upon the sides of hills that faced the river, and around each

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there ran a triangular wall with the base along the shore and the apex near the summit. There seemed to be a sort of citadel surrounded by another wall built inside. These defences, I supposed, were built for resistance against the Tartar pirates that used to swoop down along the coast and ravage the seaboard cities. The hills on both sides of the river were growing higher and wilder as we proceeded, though some of the valleys seemed to be somewhat cultivated.

About sundown we sighted a village ahead, at the base of a big dome-shaped mountain, and, as we drew near, I saw that we were to stop there. I was glad of it, for the suspense and pain of my wound was beginning to be unbearable. McKim was regaining consciousness, but seemed to be getting feverish, and occasionally muttered incoherently. As we drew up to a bamboo jetty that was built out into the stream, I noticed a very old man who was in the little crowd that had come down to meet us. He was apparently of a very great age, although strong and active, and in spite of his round, stooping shoulders, and the deep wrinkles that seamed his face, there was something about him that again suggested that bizarre resemblance to McKim.

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We were carried ashore and laid on the ground near a hut, the crowd watching us apathetically, but the old man I have mentioned drew near and appeared to ask some questions of our captain. The next moment he became perfectly convulsed, and when he straightened out again I saw that his face was simply demoniacal with rage. He came hobbling over to us with such an uncanny agility, and a look of such concentrated hatred and malice upon his face, that I decided that at last we had swung to the end of our scope.

McKim was the nearest to him, and was lying on his back, his face flushed and muttering to himself with lips parched from fever. As the old man approached him I saw an expression of the most utter astonishment pass over his face, and following his gaze saw that his eyes were fixed on the rosary or amulet that hung about the neck of my shipmate. The next moment he had it in his hand and was breaking into exclamations of wonder and awe. He kept glancing from the rosary to McKim's face, and suddenly he darted to him, took his head between his hands, and said a few quick harsh words. McKim stared at him stupidly for a moment, then answered:

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“ Annah.”

I did not know it at the time, but have since discovered that the word for “ mother ” of the Tuscaroras and Six Nations is “ Annah,” which is the same as the Tartar word. But the effect on the old man was magical. He fairly capered with excitement, and in a moment came rushing over to me and fired a torrent of questions, but I simply pointed to McKim, and then towards the east, at which he nodded several times. I think I had unwittingly answered his question.

Suddenly McKim began to talk, slowly at first, then rapidly and incoherently. The old man dropped on his haunches beside him and listened with the most peculiar expression I ever saw upon a human face. Wonder, interest, awe, and fear chased one another successively across his features, and all the time there was the look of one listening to a long-forgotten melody. At first I thought McKim’s mutterings were inarticulate and meaningless, but pretty soon I recognised the fact that he was talking to himself in a North American Indian dialect, many of the guttural sounds of which once heard are unmistakable, and all the while the old Chinaman was listening with the

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ecstasy of a parent who, almost contrary to his belief, hears the voice of a child whom he has long believed dead.

Soon, however, the talking ceased. McKim moaned and raised a bloody hand to his head. The old man posted off, and a few minutes later some coolies came down with stretchers, and we were taken up to a hut where, under the supervision of our aged friend, some of the women stripped and bathed us and then laid us on mattings, covering us with homespun blankets, for the evening was chilly.

I lay awake a long time, partly from the pain of my wound and partly because the affairs of the afternoon had suggested something to my mind, and the more I thought it out the more convinced I became that my theory was a possible if not a probable one. McKim had once told me that his grandmother was a Tuscarora squaw, and that he had been brought up among the Indians. In that case it was more than probable that he had picked up one or more dialects to which, in his feverish and unbalanced mental condition, his mind might naturally revert.

I knew that there were many proofs of the Asiatic origin of the Indian tribes of North America, the

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similarity of many words, the same system of counting; their strong comparative anatomical resemblance, as well as those of disposition, religions, and system of hieroglyphics. A man who had made a study of philology had once told me that, in eighty-three American languages, one hundred and seventy-three words have the same roots in both continents. Could it not be possible that some one dialect had preserved its integrity? Then the little incident of the rosary occurred to me, and that suggested another train of thought. Our captors had not paid any attention to the thing whatever, except that one of them ran it through his hands apparently to ascertain if it possessed any intrinsic value, and had dropped it as worthless. But the moment the old man had seen it he had become violently agitated, and, I thought, a trifle alarmed, for he had looked around apprehensively, and now that I came to think of it, he was of an entirely different type from the rest of the crowd. He seemed more of a Tartar or Hun, which, however, made it rather difficult to account for his presence way in the southeast of Asia.

This suggested another idea. I had heard of these rosaries being found in Thibet and Mongolia, but

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never, that I could remember, in China. Evidently the rosary had some particular significance to the old man that it had not to the others. And the old man was of a distinctly different type. Then I recalled what I knew about the early history of Asia. I remembered that toward the close of the twelfth century, one Tchinggiskhan, the king of the Southern branch of the great tribe of Huns, who had not shared in the great southwestern movement of the Northern Huns, came down from the northern steppes of Mongolia and ravaged the country far and wide. He overran China Tartary, India, Poland, Hungary, Persia, and Syria. Later, his grandson, Khan Khoubilai, finished the conquest of China, and, for the first time that we know of, subdued that vast empire. Khoubilai's domain was the largest that ever existed. It reached northward to the deserts beyond the In Chau Mountains, westward into Gobi, the Sandy Desert; eastward it touched the river Siao, and to the south it formed the shore of the Youé Sea. A hundred years later Tchon Youen-Tchang founded the great Ming Dynasty, one of the first acts of which was to expel the Tartars from their domain. But the great southern movement of Khoubilai would, I

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thought, account for the pure Tartar stock in almost any part of the Chinese Empire. Might it not be that some clan had split off from the main horde or army, and, being separated and possibly cut off by enemies, had remained, or pushed southeast to strike sea water?

To trace McKim's Tartar origin was more difficult, but there were a few strong evidences. The rosary given him by his Indian ancestress, his dialect, and his undeniable physical resemblance to the Mongols. I called to mind an early writer who had referred the savage and larger portion of America to the North of Asia, and the civilised families of Mexico and Peru to ancient Egypt and Southern Asia. The Tartars who inhabited the deserts north of the great wall of China were a nomadic, roving race, and the geographical conformity of Behring Strait would make an eastern migration perfectly possible. Once having reached the continent of North America, they would naturally turn their faces southward, finding no resistance and a rich and fertile country before them. The more I thought of the matter, the more I became satisfied with my theory, and finally, having reached a standstill, I fell asleep.



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The murmur of voices awakened me, and, turning over, I saw that the room was full of men who were arguing excitedly and occasionally casting scowling looks at McKim, who was sleeping heavily. But our old friend of the evening before was the most excited of the lot, and apparently the most authoritative, for finally the tumult ceased, and the rabble poured out. I tried to get up, but he shook his head and motioned for me to remain where I was. One of the women brought me some food, a stew of chicken and rice, and a few slices of raw fish.

With the old man's permission I moved my mat to the doorway of the hut, and amused myself watching the fishermen along the river bank. Evidently our jailor was well disposed, for he spoke to one of the women, who steeped me a bowl of tea and furnished me with a pipe and tobacco. I tried to talk with him, as I was somewhat familiar with the dialects of the coast, but, although he made every effort to understand me, he was unsuccessful.

After it had grown dark he went out, but in a few moments returned with a heavily padded tunic. I was not at all chilly, but he motioned for me to put it on. A few minutes later two coolies came in, and

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lifting McKim, mat and all, carried him outside the door, where there were a little knot of men waiting—coolie carriers I made them out to be. McKim was laid in a hammock swung from a bamboo, and our host, or jailor, motioned for me to get into another like it, and in a few moments we were all in motion.

Although it was very dark, I could see that we were climbing up into a very wild country. Occasionally the road led along the edge of a chasm, and I could hear the water boiling far beneath. At dawn we reached a little hut, where we remained all day, and at night the trip began again, this time with new coolies. On the fourth morning of our journey, McKim's condition began to change for the better, and, after sleeping all day quite naturally, he suddenly awoke to consciousness. I did not want to excite him any more than was necessary, so in answer to his questions simply said that we were prisoners, but were being well treated and just now were moving into the interior, probably to make escape more difficult. That seemed to satisfy him, and, after eating a light meal, he went to sleep.

That night we travelled again, and as the first

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light began to break in the east, I saw that we were entering a big, fertile valley. We changed bearers once more, but the following day continued our travel instead of waiting for the darkness.

As soon as we started, I noticed a difference in our coolies. They were leaner, more muscular, and more of the Tartar or Samoeide type. I noticed also that the old man seemed to address them in a different tongue and that they treated him with great deference.

When we halted at noon McKim was wide awake and taking an active interest in his surroundings. While we were talking, for I had told him nothing about the queer events at Hai Chin, the old man approached, and as he drew near I could see that he was powerfully agitated. He tried once or twice to speak, but seemed unable to articulate. Finally he jerked out a few quite guttural words.

The effect on McKim was magical. He was on his feet like a flash, and stood with his head dropped between his shoulders, looking at the old Chinaman through narrowed lids—every muscle was tense, and his lower jaw worked nervously up and down like a pointer dog's when he is standing a covey. The

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Chinaman's face was set and rigid, and, his eyes boring straight into McKim, he spoke slowly four monosyllabic words; and like an echo the words came back followed by a dozen or so more.

Then the spell was rudely broken. The old man uttered a sudden cry, and the bearers came running up. He spoke to them in quick, unmusical words while they stood apparently wonderstruck, uttering at intervals astonished grunts, much resembling the "Ugh! ugh!" of the American Indian.

I turned to my partner. "McKim, what the deuce does it all mean?"

He looked at me, his face dazed and awestruck.

"He talks my grandmother's language," he said weakly.

"Is he talking it now?"

"No, but he is talking one like it. What does it mean, doctor?" He turned on me almost fiercely.

"It means," I answered, "that you are among your relatives. I hope they are glad to see you. He can tell you more about it than I can."

McKim turned to the old man and said a few words. The moment he began to speak, the coolies dropped

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upon their knees and touched their foreheads to the ground. The old man stood listening respectfully. In a moment he answered.

"His name is Khan-ghi-sen," said McKim, turning to me. "He says I speak an almost forgotten language used only by the nobility of his tribe, and he wants to know where I come from."

"Suppose you ask him where you are going," I suggested. "Keep him guessing, as you Yankees say."

McKim turned to Khan-ghi-sen and spoke. It seemed to me that the Khan was rather apologetic in his manner.

"He says to my own people," said McKim. "I don't know what he means by that."

"Ask him if your people came down here six hundred years ago from the northward beyond the Great Wall," I ventured.

McKim repeated the question. It was easy to see that my straight shot had gone home. The Khan was evidently overcome with curiosity and from that time on treated me with marked respect.

"He wants to know why you ask that question," said McKim. "He says that it is not well that one

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not of our people should know so much. But he says we must be going on."

Towards evening we saw the village lying below us in a fertile sheltered valley, most of which was planted in rice. The sun was setting, and as we came down the mountain-side we caught the successive flashes of crimson and green from the reflection of its rays upon flooded rice fields that were terraced against the sloping side of the hill. I noticed that the path we travelled was almost obliterated; indeed, I doubt if anyone not acquainted with the way could have followed it.

Night had fallen when we reached the outskirts of the village, but evidently something unusual was going on, for the streets were crowded with people, and as we passed the temple we heard the muffled "boom-boom" of the great drum, and the noiseless tread of the priests walking round and round. No one impeded us in any way, but there were many curious glances as our hammocks passed, and more and more was I struck by the similarity of these people to my shipmate.

The arrangement of the houses was different from anything I ever saw before in China. They were

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built of bamboo and wicker-work closely thatched and of a peculiar conical shape, with a bulge about six feet from the ground: a Tartar style of architecture, as I afterwards discovered.

We entered one of the best, which had evidently been arranged for our reception. Inside there were a couple of large comfortable couches the sides of which were of a peculiar scroll-shape design, and in one corner there was a little recess in which stood—or rather squatted—a brass image of Buddha about eighteen inches in height, in front of which were arranged in a semicircle nine brazen vases, of wine-glass shape.

About eight o'clock the following morning the Khan appeared and took McKim away with him. When they came back, about two hours later, I could see that McKim was tremendously excited. His hands were working spasmodically, his nostrils distended, and from time to time I caught the red glare from his pupils, which I learned to associate with unusual excitement. He turned on me abruptly.

“Doctor,” he said, “do you know what these people tell me?”

“I can form an idea,” said I. “They claim that

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you are a descendant of their own race, and, more than that, a descendant of their own regal line."

He looked at me in amazement. "How did you ever discover that?" he demanded.

"Simply because I have thought so myself for some time."

"Well," he said, "I give it up. Surprises are coming too fast. But do you know what they want me to do?"

"Rule them?"

"Not quite that, but to remain with them as a sort of prince to be instructed by their wise men, and perhaps later to lead the tribe northward. It seems that their own country is to the north, and they have a tradition that a man of their royal blood will come from across a big water and will lead them home."

"A very hackneyed popular tribal prophecy," I remarked. "And what are you going to do?"

"Oh, I don't know. I've got to think it out. It doesn't make much difference, as they wouldn't let us go just now, anyway."

"What does the Khan rank in the outfit?" I asked.



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"He is the younger brother of the present chief. He went down to the coast with a good bulk of the opium for the partner of our friend in Manila. It seems we had the misfortune to kill one of his servants who went out with the stuff; rather a favourite with the old man."

"And whose plan was it to scragg us?"

"Oh, that scheme was cooked up by our friend's partner, who wants to start a little piracy business of his own and needed a vessel."

"He got it, and something to boot," I said with a grin, thinking of the way he had dived into the scuppers.

A little later the Khan came for McKim, and they went out together.

And then began a process which I hope to God I may never live to see again—the reversion of a man from the civilised to the barbarian. Day by day I could see the insidious process working. Through the wiles of that cunning schemer Khan-ghi-sen, McKim sunk slowly backward through six centuries in a little more than six months. At the end of that time I doubt if there was a fiercer, keener, more blood-

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thirsty pagan in the whole clan than he. I witnessed the process passively, for I had always felt more interest than affection for my partner. At first the old Khan watched me with jealous suspicion, but seeing that I was indifferent, his vigilance relaxed, and we even became, in a way, good friends.

McKim was allowed to taste both the freedom and the darker pleasures of an Oriental life. His manner and disposition began to undergo subtle changes, until the liking I had once felt for him turned gradually into disgust. At last the climax came.

For some time there had been frequent depredations among the scarce flocks of the tribe, and though repeated efforts had been made to detect the robbers, all had been unsuccessful. Finally, one night McKim took a dozen of the young men from the village and managed to ambush and capture the thieves, although in the fight one of his men was knifed and killed. The following day, hearing a great hubbub in the market-place, I went over to see what it was all about. To my horror I saw one of the robbers lashed to a stake that had been firmly planted into the ground, while near by a man was heating a spearhead in a little

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mud furnace. Standing by, apparently directing the proceeding, stood my shipmate.

"McKim," said I, "what under Heaven are you up to? Are you going to torture that man?"

"Yes," he answered sullenly; "he has killed one of us."

"But, my God, man, you can't torture him. Remember that you're an American!"

"I am a Mongol," he answered in an even voice; "it is the custom of our people."

"Well, it's not the custom of mine to stand by and see a man tortured." I laid my hand on the hilt of my knife. "Kill him if you want to, but if that beggar with the spear tries to torture him, there will be another of you gone up."

His eyes narrowed, and he tried to glare me down, but if his eyes were aflame, my blood was as well, and I verily believe I would have tackled the whole gang. But I think the good English words brought him to his senses.

"Dr. Boles," he said at length, "it was my fault that you got into this scrape, and I had hoped to be able to make some sort of amends, but it is time we parted. I have wanted to keep you with us, because

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you stood by me in danger, and my people say your skill is great, and honour and respect you. But your ways are not our ways, and it is better that we part."

. . . . .

The next day I left for the coast in the care of six coolies and a sort of lieutenant. It was a ten-days' trip to where I could get transportation to Hong-Kong, but in due time I reached that city without accident. There I found a friend who was captain of a big, flat, sea-going freight-car about to clear for Delagoa Bay. He wanted to ship a doctor, as the callow youth that came out with him had got war-fever and scuttled off to the Cape.

I was glad to get the billet, as my funds were getting low and the East Coast offers many chances.

While I was hanging around Hong-Kong waiting for the ship to sail a train of circumstances arose, however, which postponed my much desired departure from China, but as it gave me a chance to get even with some of my old enemies I suppose that I have no right to complain.

I have never heard from McKim, and at times it

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is hard to realise that, even in that land of incongruities, there is to-day a native-born American, of mingled Puritan and Indian blood, who rules as the lawful and hereditary chief of a thousand wild Asiatics.

## IN THE CHINA SEA

**B** OLES and I first met in Hong-Kong. I had just came down from Vladivostock on one of the little steamers that make the loop from Melbourne up along the Philippines for Amur Bay via Japan, then down along the coast of China and back to Australia. What I was doing up there has nothing to do with this yarn. It was in connection with some contracts with the Russian Government, and concerned the eastern terminus of the trans-Siberian railway. It turned out to be a very unpleasant business, and resulted in my receiving a cable from the narrow-minded superintendent of the Iron Construction Co., which I represented, giving me an order for my transportation expenses home, and telling me that my services were no longer needed by the company. All of this, because I saw and acted on an opportunity to save the concern about half a million dollars by taking advantage of a bit of Slavic stupidity. The difference would have gone through my hands, but of course I would have turned it over to the concern.

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Well, the result was that, having a little money of my own to invest, and hearing great tales about the business opportunities in Manila, I thought it might be worth while to run down to Hong-Kong and take the trip across, just to size up the proposition.

The *Diamante* was the next steamer to sail for Manila, and as she didn't leave for three days I had time to see a little of the place. The annual pony races were on, and having a natural weakness for that sort of thing, I got in a 'rickshaw one afternoon and went out to the "Happy Valley" to see if perhaps I couldn't manage to pick a gamy one, as I used to at the Danbury Fair at home. Crowds of people never interested me much, except where their business was concerned, but I must say that the outfit I struck going to those miserable pony races was enough to take a man's mind off his troubles. There were all colours, creeds, and nationalities, soldiers of every kind and description, from the big, black, sombre-looking Sikhs in Her Majesty's uniform down to the smiling, chattering little Jap middies off the men-o'-war. Once in a while a long, raw-boned Yankee officer-man in dirty khakees would come lounging along and pass a dapper swell of Her Majesty's Royal Welsh Fusi-

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leers, and the two would remind me of a standard Vermont road horse, just in from a forty-mile hike through the mud, beside a park hackney passing the bandstand. Then the girls! Rangey, thoroughbred Americans,—tourists, and army women, I reckon,—that made the blowsy, high-haired English girls, with their red cheeks and big teeth, look like healthy servants; tourist-ladies that might have come from any part of the world and any stratum of society; wicked-looking and often beautiful adventuresses that hang around the swell hotels and have dear friends in official circles; naughty little Jap girls all innocent of their naughtiness, which, no doubt, supports their parents, and, mixed all through the gang, common soldiers and sailors, Chinese merchants, East Indians, Anglo-Asiatics, policemen with other policemen to watch them, coolies, and scum. Usually, just as the road got the most congested, there would be a hubbub and turmoil, the “hhui! hhui!” of panting ’rickshaw men, and presently a gilded, emblazoned ’rickshaw that seemed to grow around a big, fat, placid mandarin would be squeezed out of the mess and sling down the road. One of these tally-hos came slap-bang into my one-horse shay and scared my coolie until



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I thought that he was going to run away. I never did have much respect for Chings, not nearly as much as I've got now, perhaps because then I'd only seen the laundry kind, so I turned myself loose and talked to them the way I've heard the mate of a Mississippi flat talk to the nigger roustabouts. I think they guessed what a lot of it meant, but I'm afraid they had the best of me because I'm sure that I know what they said back.

I saw one or two races run before I made up my mind to take a flyer, and decided that they were run square enough; they were too slow to be shady, besides, while I've never radiated any too much affection for our English brothers, I must say that they're good sports;—those pony races would die a natural death if they weren't.

I picked my pony for the third race and went over to the bookmaker and bid for twenty dollars' worth of him. The fellow was busy and didn't hear me, and I was just going to toot again when a good-looking chap beside me said in a quiet sort of way:

“Poor bet.”

“Poor racing, too,” said I, looking at him rather hard and trying to think where I had seen him before.

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He was a man about forty-odd years old, I should say, medium-sized, but with unusually broad shoulders and a general look of physical hardness. He was rather well dressed and his clothes fitted him too well for an Englishman. There was something familiar about him, but I couldn't seem to place him at all.

"What's the matter with the pony," said I; "can't he run?" Ordinarily I would have been put out at a man for mixing up in my business without an invitation, but this man looked as if he had so much sense that somehow I didn't seem to mind it.

"The pony can run like a jack-rabbit," said he, "but he's a nasty one, and the jockey's all in a funk. Look at his face—and his knees—he'll never get that pony around the track."

When I looked at him again I saw that my tipper-off was right. The other ponies were mostly ridden by their owners,—Englishmen, some of them big, heavy fellows,—but this pony had a Chinese boy on him, and he was beginning to find it out.

"Guess you're right," said I; "much obliged for the tip." I looked over the rest of the bunch and directly spotted a neat little bay with run written all over him.

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"Guess I'll try the bay," I said.

"I've got twenty on him," said he, and turned away.

Well, the race was run, and before they'd reached the half-mile my first guess was cutting figure eights. The bay won in a walk. I tried to find my friend, but he must have gone.

The next morning I got talking to a Yankee tourist that I met in the hotel, and he advised me to go over to old Kowloon, as it was a fair specimen of a Chinese town. Chinese towns don't interest me much, but I had to kill time some way, so I got on the little-boy's-size ferry boat, crossed the straits, and got a 'rickshaw man, who must have been mighty hard up, to lug me the three miles and back for about thirty cents of our money. I was very glad that I'd taken the trip before I'd gone half a mile, as it gave me a few points to tell the folks at home about raising garden truck; also, it warned me from eating any myself while I was in China.

I wandered about the dirty old ruin for a while, not because I enjoyed it at all, but because it was really educational to see how hogs, chickens, and Chinamen can all live in the same place together without its appar-

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ently hurting the hogs and chickens. When I'd taken all of that in I went up the hill back of the inhabited town, where there are the ruins of the old city, to see if I could find any old relics or corpses or something of that sort to cheer me up. Strange to say, the place was actually cheerful and pretty in a way, although, in all of my travels, and I've banged around a lot, they've never shown me anything East or West that can come up to the little rock-heaps through Connecticut.

Then I got a surprise. I'd been browsing along the old wall, built years and years ago to stand off the Tartar pirates that used to gut these towns (what a hard-up crowd the Tartars must have been, by the way!), and I'd dug a couple of old iron grape-shot out of the mason-work with my knife. The loneliness and desolation of the abandoned ruins had soaked into me so deeply that I began to feel that I was a part of the place and rather liked the sensation, when suddenly I heard the deep muffled boom of a great bell. It was an eerie sound, and reminded me that I was a real live man, after all, and had no business prying around a place abandoned to ghosts, if they were only the low-down ghosts of Chinamen. There was

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nothing in the character of the sound to suggest that it was caused through a living agency; it seemed rather to proceed from the place itself. I had left the wall and was going up the side of the hill toward what seemed to be a row of temples, the central one being larger than the rest and having in front of it a long series of great, rough-hewn granite steps which ended above in a black, gloomy arch. At the foot of the steps there was a level space behind which a wall of rotting mason-work and cement, with a great red disc upon it, marked the spot of former executions. Just beyond this obsolete shambles stood a gnarled old tree from one of the boughs of which there hung an ancient bell of bronze. A man was standing beside the bell, striking it with his fist, used hammer-wise, and as I came around the corner of the wall I saw that it was my friend of the racetrack. Perhaps with a sort of an idea of getting even with him for the start that he had given me with his miserable old bell, I walked quietly up behind him to within not more than ten steps, my feet making no noise on the hard, dry turf. As I stopped he caught a glimpse of me out of the tail of his eye. I had expected to see him jump or let out a yell. My own nerves are about

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as good as they turn them out, yet I am satisfied that if anyone had swung suddenly into my near range of vision in that creepy place I would have cleared that eight-foot wall in one leap. But I was disappointed. He simply swung around in a light, muscular sort of way and nodded indifferently.

“Good-morning,” said he; “sight-seeing?”

“Yes,” I answered; “trying to kill time until my ship sails.”

“This ought to be a good place,” said he with a bit of a smile; “they’ve killed a good many centuries here. I expect you find it rather slow.”

“Yes,” I answered, a little nettled by his manner; “it *is* slow; not quite as slow as the pony races, I’ll admit, but fairly deliberate. By the way,” I added, “speaking of the pony races, I didn’t have a chance to thank you for your tip. I wanted to buy you a drink or something.”

He smiled, a little sarcastically, I thought.

“Oh, don’t mention it. I’ve got it in for those bookmakers, and am only too glad for a chance to rub it in.”

He pulled out his watch.

“What are you doing ’way over here?” I asked

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abruptly. It was none of my business, of course, but I wanted to keep him. To tell the truth, I was getting mighty lonely and tired of messing around all by myself; then, seeing that he rather hesitated, I tried a new tack.

“Why do you suppose these fool Chings lit out of here and went to live in that mud-puddle at the bottom of the hill?”

“Oh, I fancy that this place is too bright and cheerful and wholesome for the Chinese idea of comfort. The beggars hate fresh air. Well, I must clear. Good-morning.” He turned around and went off down the hill.

Wasn't that just the English of it? Why, I would have been glad to talk to a mud-turtle in a God-forsaken hole like that!

After he'd gone the place was lonelier than ever, so I made tracks for the city. One would think that, after the experience of the morning, I would have had sense enough to stay around the hotel the rest of the day. Unfortunately, I'm one of the restless kind that can never stay in one place for five minutes, so that afternoon nothing would do but I must go up on the Peak and take in the view.

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The city of Victoria is built at the foot of the slope of a high mountainous ridge that ends on the eastern side of Hong-Kong in a great high peak. I've forgotten the name, but everyone just calls it the Peak. On a fine day, which doesn't often happen, the view of the city and the straits and Kowloon beyond, is grand. Of course, it can't begin to compare with some of the views at home, but for that part of the world it is hard to beat. There is an incline railway that runs from the city up to the top of the ridge, where there are a big hotel and a lot of government buildings, Sikh barracks, a hospital or two, and some residences.

The incline railway stops at the Peak House, the big hotel on the top of the ridge, and there, following the lead of a mixed crowd of tourists, who knew all about it because they had never been there before, I got into a chair swung between two poles that bent a little too much under my weight to make me entirely easy in my mind. Those tourists just took root in those contraptions as if their wildest dreams of luxury had been attained, but they didn't fit me in a single spot.

The baby carriages down below had made me



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I feel like a Christmas doll, but these were worse. Besides, both of my porters had the heaves, due, I suppose, to their going out of training and hitting the pipe between climbs. I tried hard not to think about it, and told myself that it would be a good job if they both dropped dead in their tracks, but it was no use, and pretty soon I gave it up and got out, paid them off, and told them to "vamoose," one of the few words, by the way, that has one international meaning.

I passed some of the tourists on the way up, and as I went by I heard one of them, a countryman by the way, but from the Hoosier belt, describe the view as "real neat." Somehow that irritated me. The view was not "neat," it was downright grand. I saw that I would probably lose my temper if I got mixed up with that crowd, so I hit off to one side, and presently came out on a little knoll not quite as high as the summit, but much more select. Consequently, as I came up over the edge I was a little put out to see a man sitting on a big granite boulder squinting down at the straits through a binocular. One peep showed me that it was my unsociable acquaintance. He heard the scuffle of my feet on the rocks and looked quickly

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around. I have never seen a madder look than his face wore for the moment.

"For Heaven's sake," said I, "I always heard that China was the roomiest place on the face of the earth, but it seems to me that I can't turn round without running into you." I thought I'd sort of anticipate him. He got a little red, and then I began to get peevish.

"Cheer up, old man!" said I; "I won't bother you," and I turned to go.

"Hold on!" he said; "I wasn't hot on your account, and if I seemed rude this morning I'm sorry. It was something that I saw down there that gave me that sweet expression. Sit down, won't you?"

I lit on a rough piece of rock. To own up, the man interested me, and I was curious to find out what could have riled him at such long range. He didn't say anything for a minute, but took another stare while I admired the "neatness" of the view. Presently he laid down his glass and turned to me.

"Do you see those junks coming up the bay?" he asked.

"Those high-tailed wash-tubs with the puckered sails?" said I.

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"The same. Do you know what they are?"

"Oh, probably coastwise traders, fishermen, smugglers, pirates, scoundrels, and thieves," said I. Being Chinese, I thought the last four chances safe.

He looked at me admiringly. "You Yankees are great guessers," he said. "I fancy you've made a straight diagnosis. Feel like listening to a yarn?"

"Sure—I'm not making a cent."

Well, with that he sailed in and gave me the wildest piece of oral architecture I ever listened to. He's since written it up himself. The gist of it was that he had made a bargain with a Chinese merchant-smuggler in Manila to run a cargo of opium from some bay up near Hong Hai, across the China Sea to a place on the coast of Luzon, where the Chinaman's crowd were to look after it. The thing seemed easy enough, and would have brought him a pot of money, but after they got their dope aboard and were about to pull out, a gang from a junk jumped them and took this man Boles, for that was his name, and his partner prisoners. There was a lot more that I didn't take much stock in, about how they were carried way up into the interior, and it was discovered that this partner of Boles, who was a half-breed American In-

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dian, was in some way descended from this Chinese outfit's tribe. It was an interesting yarn enough, especially the part about what they would have made if they'd only managed to have got away with the dope, and I could easily see how sore Boles must have been at everything with a quarantine-coloured skin. When he got through I asked him some questions.

"Do you mean to say, Boles, that any of these trading junks would turn pirate if they thought there was anything in it?"

"I honestly believe they would, if they were confident that it was a sure thing and worth while. Most of them carry guns, ostensibly for defence from one another, but you can't make me believe that any of the scoundrels wouldn't take a chance if they got what *seemed* to be a sure thing."

"What cargoes do most of them carry?" I asked slowly, for his words had given me an idea, as I afterwards discovered he intended they should.

"Valuable ones very often; opium, silks, spices, tea—it all depends—might have pearls, you can't tell." He picked up his glass again.

"It would be a joke," said I, "to go out fixed for them and then get held up and turn the tables. I

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don't suppose that they'd come near you then. It's usually the way."

"I think they would, if you were where you were apt to fall in with several, and you *seemed* to be in trouble; short-handed and a bit smashed up, you know." He looked at me out of the corner of his eye.

"It would be a dangerous game," said I, thinking hard.

"Very."

"And you might get in trouble afterwards."

"No danger of that; the fact of your being attacked would warrant almost anything."

"You'd want a few sandy white men that you could absolutely depend upon in your crew," I said.

He laughed in a hard, bitter sort of a way.

"Easy to get. I know of three such. One's an ex-Spanish officer from Manila who doesn't care to go back to Spain for very good reasons of his own. Number two is a ticket-o'-leave man from Australia, whose father was a baronet, and number three's an Irish politician from New York who got his hands in the city treasurer's cash drawer without his glove on."

"A swell crowd," said I; "where did you meet them?"

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"They're members of my club," said he, with another of those nasty laughs: "the Beachcombers' Club."

"You seem to have the thing well worked out," said I; "I believe you really want to do it."

"Well, to be frank, I *do*," he answered slowly; "if I could get someone who I was sure would sit tight and see the thing through and not lose their nerve at the last moment. I'm tired of trying to do anything with these geniuses who have always made a hash of things; perhaps because I'm too familiar with the cult," he added in a hard sort of voice.

"How much of a stake would this little deal be apt to need?" I asked.

"Five hundred would fit us out."

"Oh, shucks!" said I in disgust;—"you'd want a rapid-fire gun or two, to say nothing of the best small arms—then how about your vessel? How are you going to charter a suitable packet without security? *Five hundred!* Why, you talk like an innocent kid with his head full of dime novels!—Oh, bosh!" said I, clean out of patience, "it's a nice fairy tale, but there are too many 'ifs' about it. I'm in for any sort of a reasonable business proposition, and it

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wouldn't hurt my conscience a bit to send a few piratical Chinamen to hell—but this plan of yours——”

I shut up in sheer disgust at ever having taken such a fool proposition seriously. Whipping out my knife I picked up a splinter of wood and started to whittle it, which is a trick I have when I'm put out.

Boles didn't say anything, but began to study the straits again through his glass. I could see that he was sort of irritated at the way I'd spoken my mind, and that made me more peevish than ever.

“Look here,” I said, turning to him suddenly, “what have you got up your sleeve, anyway? It sounds too darn foolish to talk of going out and hanging around with a chip on your shoulder waiting for some junk to come up and knock it off. You think that one *might*—but what real good reason have you got for thinking so?”

He laid down his glass, and I was surprised to see that his face looked real pleased.

“Now that's the kind of talk!” says he; “I piped you down as a hard-headed sort of chap the minute I saw you. I talked over this thing with the other fellows that I was speaking about, and they wanted to

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rush right off and do it before dinner. The keener they got about it the more I became satisfied that it wasn't such a snap as it looked. I haven't told you the whole game because I wanted to see how it was going to strike you first."

"Let's have the rest of it, then," said I, rather pleased that he had sized me up as I deserved.

He pulled out his handkerchief and swabbed off the lens of his glass.

"You remember what I just told you about how McKim and I lost our brig in Hai Chin Bay?"

I nodded.

"Well, I learned afterward that the crowd who cleaned us out wanted that brig to carry on a little local piracy of their own, using Hai Chin Bay as their base of operations. The chances are that I'm the only man that knows about this. My idea would be to get right off the place, which isn't far from here, and then to flop around with a broken wing in sight of the shore. I think that would draw them, and if it didn't we might go in after them. There's a valuable cargo in that tub, and the chances are that they have added to it. I was going to report the matter to the authorities here, when this plan struck me as better."



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“ Now you’re talking sense!” says I, getting interested again, “ but how about that five hundred dollars to fit out the expedition? ”

“ That’s where you’re a little too quick on the trigger, my friend. Before you begin to call a man an ass you ought to hear him through. I can show you how the item of expense is the least of the row!”

“ Fire away!” said I; “ but don’t be disappointed if I can’t see it. I’m a little thick at times.”

“ Well, it’s like this. The Spanish gentleman I spoke of a minute ago, whose name is Alvarez,—for business purposes,—stood very high in the Spanish-Filipino official circles before our friend Dewey opened the ball. Now Señor Alvarez had received and receipted for a tidy sum of money appropriated by the Spanish government to build a new cuartel, or barracks, in his district. The señor, while a man of honour, was at the same time a Spaniard, and a business man, and knowing that the erection of the barracks would take some considerable time, cast his eye about for a little profitable investment for the bulk of the appropriation in the meantime. Unfortunately, he had just locked up a large slice of it where it would be unavailable for some time, when the war became

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imminent. Alvarez is a good deal of a diplomat, but he saw that the time was not far off when he would have to account for that gold, and he couldn't see just how he was going to do it. Unlike most Spaniards, he knew a good deal about the resources of Uncle Sam, and he began to get panicky. A colleague of his who was in the same fix blew his brains out.

"Now Alvarez had a good many valuable personal effects which he didn't care to have confiscated or looted, so with rare presence of mind he bought the best little coasting schooner he could find in the port, sent to Hong-Kong for a couple of rapid-firing six-pounders, ostensibly for the gunboats,—all this before war was actually declared, mind you,—loaded his truck and his guns into the schooner, and stood ready to clear at the first sign of a squall. Even then he came within an ace of being too late, but he got away and has been hanging around here ever since. His schooner's been lying over in Macao, where the señor has a residence. He's still got plenty of money, but he hasn't got enough to make restitution and go back to Spain. I learned all of this when I was in Manila, but had forgotten all about it until not long ago I met the señor."

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"Then under these circumstances your greaser friend would naturally claim the lion's share of any enterprise such as you suggest," said I, getting more interested. I was afraid at first that *I* was to capitalise the scheme.

"No," said Boles, "the old rooster won't listen to the proposition unless we can all go shares. Afraid of being victimised. Now, that's out of the question for the Australian. The politician and I have both got enough for ourselves, but not enough to stake our convict friend, whom I consider invaluable. I believe *he's* the only downright honest one in the outfit." He smiled a little.

"So, as far as I can gather, my job is to stake him and myself?"

"Precisely," he answered. "Now think it over to-night and I'll see you in the morning. You may wonder why I have told you all this; it's simply because I'm sick of hanging around here, and while I hate to leave what seems to be a good thing, if you decide that you don't want to go in, I'm off for Delagoa Bay next week. I've got rather a poor billet as surgeon on that old contraption you see lying off the Kowloon docks over across the straits there. Well.

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think it over—see you in the morning—you're stopping at the Connaught? I thought so—good-evening." In that usual abrupt way of his he leapt to his feet and made off down the hill.

Well, here was a business proposition for a starter. If it had been in any other part of the world I would have laughed at it, but in the East one's scruples are a little on the bias, like everything else. Hong-Kong, and the bay, and the tourists, and everything else went out. I shoved my hands down in my pockets and started down thinking hard. But all the while I knew perfectly well what I was going to do about it. At the worst it seemed to me that we only stood to lose a little grub money, for I had no intention of buying Alvarez' tub or anything like that—we would simply insure him against its loss. I hadn't thought to ask Boles if he or any of the rest could navigate, but I took it for granted that he had considered all that. And I was satisfied that five men like ourselves, with all the modern conveniences for murdering, could stand off slathers of junks. I might as well confess while I'm at it that there was another thing in the crazy business that appealed to me, although it made me ashamed of myself; that was the excitement of it.

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I cursed myself for a fool, instead of the sensible man of affairs that I had tried to be, but it was no use, the more I thought of the scheme the better I liked it. Besides, it would be a good thing to teach those miserable pirates a lesson. The idea of such things existing in these days!

About ten o'clock the following morning, while I was sitting in the office of the hotel trying to find the reading matter between the advertisements of one of the local papers, I heard a familiar voice at my elbow, and looking up saw Boles and another man. The stranger was a fine-looking chap, very well dressed, and with an air of breeding about him.

"Good-morning, Mr. Knapp," said Boles. "Mr. Knapp, let me introduce Mr. Barton."

I shook hands with Mr. Barton in some surprise, not quite seeing why Boles had brought this swell around when we were to have a business talk.

"Mr. Barton is the gentleman I spoke to you about yesterday," said Boles, "the one whom I was so anxious to have connected with our little deal."

I tried not to show my surprise, but I'm afraid it stuck out a little, as Barton got rather red. I knew, without looking at Boles, that there was a sarcastic

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grin tucked away somewhere around the corner of his mouth.

"Come up to my room, gentlemen," said I, "and we'll talk this thing over."

We went up, and when we were settled Boles got up and opened the door which I had closed. The room was at the end of the corridor, and when the door was open we could see all the way down. I like those little details; they show that a man has a careful mind.

"Well, Mr. Knapp," said Boles, "what have you decided?"

"Just this," said I: "I'd like to join, but I have no intention of paying two initiation fees. Now I'm a business man if I'm nothing else, and I've got a plan for the incorporation of this stock company which ought to be satisfactory to all hands." With that I put the thing before them as I saw it, they nodding as I went along. The gist of it was that each of us was to deposit a certain amount with a Hong-Kong trust company, to be paid to Alvarez or his estate in case we failed to return his schooner at a certain time. Having insured him against loss, I decided not to allow him anything beyond his regular share for the use of his schooner, as I didn't think we would have

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to. We were to share the running expense equally, except Barton, who, not having taken any financial risk, was to receive a twentieth share of the net profits, while the rest of us would each share a fourth of the remainder. I had expected that he would be sulky at this, but he never said a word, didn't even seem to be paying attention, but just sat there smoking a cigarette in a lazy sort of a way that got on my nerves. When I got through Boles asked him if he was satisfied with the arrangement, and then he suddenly woke up and said: "Ay—ay—anything you say, ye know" —and then tilted back against the wall and stared out of the window, glue-eyed.

Boles went right off to talk to Alvarez, who had come over from Macao. I spent the rest of the day fretting around the hotel and playing pool with an apothecary from one of our men-o'-war, who told me that he was from New Haven, and knew some folks of mine in Bridgeport.

Boles came in late in the afternoon, tired but triumphant. He told me that he had had a hard time with Alvarez, but had nailed him, and that we would be able to sail in a week. His idea was to give it out that we were going to Singapore in ballast to trade

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around the islands of the Malay Archipelago, and then, once clear, to run down the coast and troll for pirates. He was full of plans of how he could manage to make the old hooker look like a partial wreck. I told him to be blame careful not to make her look like a total wreck. These Britishers have no more sense of humour than a woodchuck.

"By the way," said I; "have we got any sailormen in the outfit besides yourself?"

"They're all sailormen more or less, except the politician. *He's* volunteered to cook. Seemed quite keen about it. Know anything about a boat yourself?"

"I'm better at figures," said I, "but I was hatched on the beach at New London and was always 'long-shore as a kid. Guess I can take my trick."

The next morning Boles took me over to Macao to see the schooner and meet the other two members of the syndicate. I took even less fancy to this pair than I had to the indolent jail-bird gentleman.

The Spaniard was a man about sixty years of age, very tall, thin, and sallow-looking, with a face and manner like a college professor. His voice was very soft and gentle, but while he held my hand tightly in



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both of his long wet ones, and told me how the ambition of his life was being realised now that he had met me, his shifty green eyes were playing around like the tongue of a snake, and taking in Boles and Grogan and the bay—everything but looking straight into mine.

The politician was a little better, but that didn't make him altogether a star. He must have sat for the caricatures of the ideal "boodle alderman," for that was his style, precisely. He began at once to ask me all about New York, who was going to run for this and that office, and it wasn't long before he managed to get me to one side and tell me that I was "ahll r-right"; that he was "dommed glad to have a counthryman in this deal," and "that we Americans must stick to wan anither." Before he got through talking I had made up my mind that the greaser was the better man of the two.

## II

That night we fixed up the business part of the scheme, not without some wrangling, but with no bad feeling. The next day Boles got to work on the

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schooner. Of course we had to evade Uncle Sam's filibustering scouts, so Boles very ingeniously built a false bulkhead just abaft the forecastle, between which and the real one we hid the guns and ammunition. He rigged another one aft for the small arms.

By common consent Boles was regarded as being in command of the expedition, consequently he did most of the work of preparation. The rest of us lent him a hand whenever he needed it, which wasn't often. The schooner was in pretty good shape, and after she'd been scraped and caulked in a few places, all that needed much overhauling was her running rigging.

What little work there was to be done in provisioning her up, Grogan attended to, as he was given sole charge of the commissary.

Barton stayed out aboard with Boles most of the time. Alvarez was hard at work finishing a magazine article he had written, entitled "American Treachery," and I divided my time between the Macao gambling rooms and wondering how I had ever managed to get roped into such a foolish game as this appeared to be. The most consoling feature of it was that, barring accidents, it cost practically nothing, as

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the commissary bill, which amounted to about twenty-five dollars apiece, and the little overhauling, were the only expenses we would have.

One little incident which occurred when we were all at Alvarez' place one evening, annoyed me considerably. It was after dinner, and our host and the politician had drunk a little more old Madeira than they really needed. While we were having our coffee and cognac, and discussing things in general, I remarked, to no one in particular:

"Suppose we bang around for a while with our broken wing, and no one appears to take any interest in us,—then unless we find your brig I suppose the whole game's off."

Grogan and Alvarez, who I noticed had been very thick right along, exchanged a cute sort of look which I happened to catch.

"Yes," said Boles, "then the joke's on us."

"Not on yer life," said Grogan; "sure we can take an inthrest in thim." He laughed in a significant sort of a way. I saw Alvarez nudge him slyly with his elbow. Then the Spaniard broke into his soft, purring laugh.

"Ah—you would have us to becoam ladrones our-

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selves, my friend Pheel"—Grogan's first name was Phil.

After dinner I made an excuse to walk down to the landing with Boles, who had taken up his quarters on the schooner. Neither of us said anything for a while, but I think that each knew what was in the other man's mind. When we got to the landing he turned to me.

"Come out aboard, Knapp, and have a little quiet chin-chin."

"Thanks, I will," said I; "that combination up there would jaw me to death. A lying greaser and a drunken Irishman is a bad combination for a man with troubles of his own."

"You don't seem to have a very gilt-edged opinion of your *confrères*," said he.

"No more have you," I answered, "only you don't show it. It's just the difference in our breed."

He didn't contradict this, but hauled up the boat and motioned me to get in the stern. He cast off and picked up the oars, and in a minute had laid us alongside the schooner. On the way out we passed a sampan headed for the beach, but neither of us thought anything of it. Boles made fast the painter,

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and we went below. The cabin was very comfortable, neat as wax, and smelling strongly of fresh paint. Neither one of us used much liquor, but Boles brought out a box of Manilas, and we both lit up.

When our flues were drawing well, I put both elbows on the table and leaned towards the man on the other side.

“Look here, Dr. Boles, I’m going to ask you a straight question, and I want a straight answer. Are we going to attempt to capture any harmless trader that doesn’t attack us first? In other words, is this expedition to be as you represented it to me at first, or is it to be just a damn piratical scheme?”

Boles dropped his chin in his hand and looked at me hard from under his straight, heavy eyebrows.

“Why do you ask that?”

“I’ll tell you why—because I’ve got a good old New England conscience in me, and it doesn’t jibe with piracy in any form. I’ve gone into this thing with the idea that it was to be straight and aboveboard, and that we weren’t to molest anyone that didn’t bother us, with the exception of the crowd that stole your brig in Hai Chin Bay. So if you people have got any other cards up your sleeve, I’d just like to call

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your hand now before we start, because I tell you frankly that if any funny business is tried I'll just naturally raise hell!"

"So will I," he answered. "I haven't any New England conscience, but I've always tried to do what was square. I know what put that idea into your head, Knapp; it was what that drunken fool Grogan said at dinner——"

"No," said I, "it was what the greaser kept him from saying by that sleight-of-hand work of his——were you on to that?"

Boles' face got hard as flint. "Yes," he said, "I saw it. I don't miss many tricks when I'm playing with their kind. Of course you don't know me, Knapp, and there's no particular reason why you should believe what I tell you, but you can have my word for what it's worth, that as long as I can help it there will be nothing done on this cruise beyond what we have discussed. Now, if you don't like the look of things it isn't too late for you to pull out."

"I never said anything about pulling out," said I, rather huffed. "I only remarked that I wouldn't stand for any crooked work."

"That's all right. Now I want to tell you another

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thing. You chaps have told me to captain this little wagon, and I'm going to do it. What you all may do now is your own affair, but, after we once clear, what I say has got to go, and the sooner everyone finds that out the better for all hands. I'll have no arguments, and no drinking beyond what is reasonable. Once we're off soundings Mr. Grogan will have other things to do than to hatch out piratical schemes, so you needn't let that worry you."

"I hadn't calculated to lose many hours sleep over it," said I, and then, as it was getting late, I got up to go. As I stepped to the companion-ladder, I heard a sort of rustle from one of the bunks 'way in under the sternsheets, and as I looked between the steps of the ladder it seemed to me that I saw a man's foot pulled into the shadow. But I didn't let on that I had seen anything, and went right up on deck, Boles following me.

"Where's Barton to-night?" I asked as we were pulling in.

"He went ashore this afternoon, and I haven't seen him since."

"I have," I thought to myself, but I made no answer, as I wanted to think the thing over.

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Boles left me at the landing, and went off aboard. I wandered back to the little Portuguese hotel where I was putting up, and my mind wasn't idle, by the way. One minute I was suspicious of Boles and was convinced that he had just gotten me off aboard because he saw that I was thinking of what Grogan had said, and he wanted to reassure me. But when I thought over his words and manner and all, I found it impossible to doubt him. Finally I came to the conclusion that Barton had probably gone off to the schooner in the sampan that we had passed on our way out, and that probably being more or less under the influence he had crawled into that after bunk for a nap, and that Boles himself had no idea that he was aboard. At any rate, it was impossible to guess how much of our conversation he had taken in, and perhaps it would be a good thing after all for him to see that the only two men in the outfit with any sense were of the same mind. However, I determined to say nothing about it to anybody, but to keep my ears buttoned back and both eyes freshly peeled for a while.

Three days later we were all ready for sea, and Alvarez, in some way, got us clearance papers for Amoy, with a general cargo, which latter consisted of



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black granite cobbles, most of which were to be chucked overboard as soon as we got something to put in their place. Once we got to sea we all had a chance to admire the ingenuity of Dr. Boles. I must say that in some respects that man was almost as smart as a Yankee. He had stepped the foremast of that schooner so that he could lift it clean out with a tackle rigged from the head of a short jurmast set up just forward of it, and another tackle from the mainmast head. The running ends of the tackles led through a couple of snatch-blocks on deck to the windlass, and the big spar was eased down by vangs rigged on the fore and back stays and port and starboard shrouds. Another tackle from the fore- to the mainmast head kept her from coming on the run. Once down, she was rolled into chocks and lashed. The short jurmast had a torn, splintered top to it which gave it just the look of a mast carried away about twenty feet above the deck. Of course, this meant an awful lot of work, as the lashings had to be all unrove from the dead-eyes in the foreshrouds, the spring and fore-stays cast off, to say nothing of all the running rigging of the foresail. Besides this, the jibboom could be unshipped, and a torn, splintered fragment shipped

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in its place, then about ten feet of the bulwarks were detachable, lifted right out, leaving jagged ends on both sides of the holiday. There were a few more artistic touches, such as a fake smashed deckhouse and a stove boat, and Boles had painted the seams of her bilge so that when she rolled it looked exactly as if they were gaping. Altogether, if she didn't look as if she'd just had the lining torn out of her in a collision, I'll eat my hat.

When we had put two days between us and Hong-Kong we put her out of commission, so to speak. It was tearing hard work, but we got the mast down without mishap, and when we had finally gotten through with her, she looked so tough that we felt like manning the boats and leaving her. She would work all right enough under a double-reefed mainsail, try-sail, and what little headsail we could set on the scrap of the jury foremast, but it was slow work. However, we were in no hurry, and every day brought us nearer our hunting grounds.

Everything aboard the schooner ran as smooth as oil. The credit of this peaceful state of affairs was largely due to Grogan, who certainly fed us to the top-notch. How he did it on the money I'm sure

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beats me, but I've a sneaking notion that Mr. Grogan put the mess-fund in that hungry pocket of his, and stood off the ship chandler indefinitely. He was always a plausible scoundrel. Since he didn't intend to pay for it, I guess he thought he might as well spread himself.

Two days after we had dismantled our little packet, a small coasting steamer sighted and came down on us, wanting to know if we needed any help. We told them no, that we could get along all right, and she left us. Boles told them that we had been in collision with a steamer the night before, and that she had left us without our making her out.

We had passed several junks, but they took no more interest in us than if we had been a hencoop struck adrift. When the fourth passed us close aboard in this contemptuous way, I saw Grogan and the señor, who were standing in the hatchway with just their heads sticking out, touch elbows. Barton was not far away, and Grogan said something to him, but he only shrugged his shoulders in a tired sort of way, and took a deep inhale of his cigarette.

We had broken out our guns after we had torn the packet apart, and Boles had then given us another

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sample of his ingenuity. In mounting the six-pounder, he had dropped the tripod right down through the deck, so that the gun just swept the bulwarks. Over the barrel he had fixed a sort of cylinder, which was painted the dirty green colour of old brass, and gave the gun just the look of one of the old smooth-bores carried by some of those coasters. The object was to give the appearance of a useless piece of ordnance ostentatiously disposed, and even after we began to fire it they would not discover its real character. The other gun, which turned out to be a Maxim machine gun, was mounted just forward the mainmast, and had a tarpaulin thrown over it.

After five or six junks had passed us with perfect indifference, I began to notice a change in the attitude of our complement. Grogan stopped joking, Alvarez was a shade less polite, Boles got restless, and I was irritable. Only Barton was as tranquil and unconcerned as ever, and lounged lazily around the deck and smoked unlimited cigarettes.

Finally I came to the conclusion that he was steeped too full of nicotine to have any particular interest in anything except his weed. But the other two I watched like a cat. Whenever Alvarez took his trick

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at the wheel, Grogan always sat on the corner of the deckhouse and chinned, often through the whole watch. Then one night this gave me an idea. My bunk was 'way aft, almost by the rudder-post, and the only light came from a little round glass deadlight set into the deck, one on each side of the wheel. I saw that if I could manage to get this out, I could hear everything that was said by anyone standing near the wheel. It wasn't a hard job, as the deck planking was fairly rotten around the edges of the glass where the water had leaked through from time to time. The hole was only about two inches wide, and after I had worked the thing loose with the point of my knife, I secured it in place with a sharp nail jammed cornerwise.

The day after I had fixed this contrivance the trouble began to brew. About the middle of the forenoon we sighted a sail on our weather bow, and pretty soon we made her out to be a junk of about fifty tons, deeply laden, and apparently heading so as to pass us within a couple of miles. When she got right abeam she suddenly put her helm down and headed straight for us. Then there was a lot of excitement; all of us but Boles, who took the wheel, slid down

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through the main hatch and hung our heads over the coaming. Boles luffed and yawed her in an unmanageable sort of way, and once he got her in stays and couldn't seem to get her out. The old junk came crashing up, and when she was right under our quarter rounded to within easy hail, and two or three Chings fired a lot of monkey talk at our skipper. Boles just shook his head and motioned them away with his hand. They chinned and jabbered away, and presently dropped a boat, which four of them got into. At this Boles pretended to be very much excited and alarmed.

"Vamos! vamos! vamos!" he yelled at the top of his lungs, jumping up and down on the deck and flourishing both hands over his head. Then suddenly he dove into the companionway and hauled out a rifle, which he aimed at the boat.

"Stand by now, you chaps," he said. "If they persist in coming after this they're our meat. Look at that junk, will you—she's scuppers under."

Grogan was swearing away to himself and muttering nervously, "Ah-h, the dir-rty blaygards, th' theevin' divils." Old Alvarez was chewing his dirty white whiskers, but Barton lounged against the

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hatchway with a cigarette between his lips and his lids half lowered, the picture of languid interest.

Boles continued his gesticulations, but the Chinamen in the boat apparently paid no attention to him. Directly they shoved off and headed for the schooner. When they had pulled or, rather, pushed about ten strokes, he threw his rifle to his shoulder and fired. The bullet went through the bow of the boat, and threw a splinter into the air.

They turned suddenly and paddled back to the junk. Alvarez gave a sigh of disgust.

"Fer Hivin's sake, Boles, go aisy!" said Grogan beseechingly; "sure ye'll be after dr-riving thim off."

"He ees foolish, our capitan," said Alvarez softly; "now they weel fear to attack us."

Barton blew a cloud of smoke into the air and said nothing. I must say that even I thought that Boles had gone too far.

Boles turned to the hatchway with a scowl.

"Shut up there; they'll be back," he said. "I've seen some of that crowd before, or I'm much mistaken."

He was not far wrong. In response to a jabber-

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ing of orders from the deck, the boat dropped back alongside, and the men tumbled out and took her aboard. In a minute the junk paid off and stood across under our stern. At first we all thought that she was going to try to lay us aboard, as she had no sooner got abeam that she tacked and bore down on us in a very suspicious manner.

I really think that if we had kept covered and obeyed orders it would have been all right, but to stand there quietly and watch that big, cumbersome tub crashing through the seas straight for us was more than Grogan's nerves could stand. With a howl of excitement he swung his big, fat body up through the hatch and made for the rapid-firing Maxim. Old Alvarez followed him, leaving a wake of seething Spanish blasphemy, but Barton lolled over against the coaming of the hatch and sleepily stroked his silky moustache. I'll acknowledge that my back hair bristled for a moment when I saw the water boiling under the low bow of that great bowl as she buried her nose in a sea, but it bristled still more when she sheered off enough for me to see the swarm of ugly-looking scoundrels peering curiously at us from her high poop.



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But the game was up. The minute that Grogan and Alvarez skipped out on deck, and the former snatched the tarpaulin off the Maxim, the junk put her helm hard down and the next minute was up in the wind. Like a flash Grogan had trained his gun on her, but before he could fire Boles had dropped the wheel and leaped alongside him, his hard face fairly livid with rage. His arm flew out, and the politician went head first into the scuppers. Before he could rise Boles had grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and hauled him to his feet.

"You swine!" he snarled, between his set teeth, "you bloated thug—when did you take command of this vessel—you big, fat-headed fool, do you want to turn us all into scoundrels like yourself? If you ever do a thing like that again, I swear I'll kill you in your tracks." He threw him to one side as if he had been a child and turned to Alvarez.

"Señor Alvarez, you are old enough, and I hope have sense enough, to know better than that. Can't you see that this fool was just about to run all our heads in a noose? If he'd fired on that junk she'd have just scuttled off and reported us, and we'd have a gunboat down on us before we could go about. Oh,

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you consummate ass!" he added, turning wearily to Grogan, "now you've gone and made a hash of the whole business. If you'd only let them alone they'd been alongside in a couple o' minutes." He turned and walked disgustedly back to the wheel.

It was easy to see that the politician was badly scared, but under his fright there was the thirst for revenge that I knew would grow as the days went by. I looked at Barton. For about the first time his face showed a little animation, and a dreamy smile hovered about his lips. He caught the politician's eye, and laughed at him sily. I saw the devil creep into Grogan's eyes, but he only turned and went below to wash away the blood that was trickling from a cut on his temple.

That night Alvarez had the mid-watch. Boles was asleep below, and Grogan was lying in the bunk just forward of mine. Barton should have been asleep in the forecastle, where his quarters were.

When Alvarez had been on duty about ten minutes, I heard Grogan slip softly out of his bunk and steal up the companionway. "Now," I thought, "there will be a bit of conversation that I would like very much to hear." I pulled the nail from under my dead-

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light and let the glass drop softly into my hand. Just as I did so there came a cat-like tread on the deck, and then a voice that I had difficulty in recognising as Barton's, it was so keen and hard:

"Well, gentlemen, are you satisfied now of the truth of what I told you before we started,—that this excursion would all be a blooming farce as long as Boles and this cursed Yankee had anything to say about the running of it?"

I heard Grogan curse and start to speak, but old Alvarez cut in.

"But what ees it that we can do? He is a deevil, this medico, and the cursed Americano would be a very hard man to put away, but then he ees a fool," he added reflectively.

Barton dropped his voice so that I could barely make out his words. "If you gentlemen are agreed, I'll attend to that part of the programme—right now!"

"How?" asked Grogan in a thick voice.

"That's my business—with my knife, if you must know. Now see here," he went on, speaking low, but in a quick, emphatic way, "it's so easy as to be almost dishonest. We get rid of them—I get rid of them,

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and then we cut out the first fat-looking vessel that we see, regardless—hoist signals of distress if you want to. None of the crew of that vessel gets back. With the guns we've got it's too easy. Then we'll have a coolie or two to help us get our mast up, and then, if you like, we'll do it again. I'm satisfied that some of these beggars would manage to cough up some jewels if you handle them right. Now what do you say,—the crime is all on my head,—do you want to be free men or have this blooming Boles cuffing you about like a stray cur? ”

I heard Grogan's heavy breathing, then old Alvarez spoke up:

“ The plan ees a good one—but reesky——”

“ Risky nothing,” said Barton. “ *I* take all the risk, you and Grogan handle the dollars—unless Boles has thrashed the pluck all out of our friend.”

“ Ah-h, hold your jaw!” said Grogan; “ I don't give a dom what you do, I'm dead sick of the whole business.” I heard him walk heavily away.

“ All right, that settles it,” said Barton, and I heard him step toward the hatch almost before I could realise that what I had heard was real. Like an eel I squirmed around in my bunk and slid down beside

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the ladder, just as I heard a light step on the topmost rung.

Cautiously he lowered himself down, and as his right hand slid over the top of the hatch, I caught the glint of steel against the starlit sky. Step by step he came down, while I, coiled like a snake at the foot of the ladder, waited for him.

When his feet were but three rungs up, he stooped down and listened, and I was sure that he would hear the beating of my heart.

Then the suspense got beyond me. With a yell I reached up with both arms, gripped him around the thighs, and slammed him down against the floor of the cabin, throwing myself upon him as soon as he landed. He struck up at me like a cat, and I felt a tearing pain under my arm. Then I grabbed and got him by both elbows. He was fairly strong, but I learned the iron business with a twenty-pound sledge, and can pick up an anvil by the horn in one hand. In a minute I had torn the knife out of his hand and sent it into him three times up to the hilt. Then I felt a grip on my shoulder, and turning, saw Boles staring down at me, his face pallid in the glow of the standing light he held above his head.

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"For the Lord's sake, Knapp——"

"Let go!" I roared, mad with pain and excitement, "wait till I fix that scum on deck." I dragged him to the ladder. "Let me go," I yelled, "d'ye hear?"

"Hold on, hold on," he said; "there's lot's of time!"

I grabbed him by the elbows and tore his hands loose, and was up the ladder at a bound. The deck was deserted. Crazy as I was with the horror of the murderous plan, and savage from the stinging pain of my wound, I can't say what I might have done had I found Grogan or the Spaniard. But the deck was deserted.

Boles had followed me up, and suddenly he raised his hand and pointed into the gloom.

"There they go," he said then, looking astern, "they have taken the gig."

I jumped below, picked a rifle out of the small-arms locker, and was on deck again in an instant. This time Boles did not offer to interfere. I threw up the piece and emptied the magazine at the fast dwindling smudge on the face of the sea, and then nearly fainted from the pain caused by the kick of the gun.

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“For Heaven’s sake, Boles, put about and get those scoundrels!” said I.

“Oh, let them go,” he answered, “it’s a good ride.” Then he noticed the blood running down my arm.

“Why, man, you’re bleeding like a stuck pig. Come below and let me fix you up.”

I did as he said, as I was feeling pretty badly by that time, and I must say that he made a very pretty job of it. There were ten stitches to be taken, but the wound was not deep—just a long, shallow cut. While he was working at it I told him how I had overheard the talk, and what a close squeak we had just had. When I was all through, he just reached out and shook my hand, without saying a word, and then grabbed the dead man by the feet and hauled him up through the hatch. A minute later I heard a splash. Such were the obsequies of Samuel Barton, Esquire, ex-convict and would-be murderer.

Boles wouldn’t let me talk any more that night, but insisted that I should turn in, as I was pretty well used up and a little sick at my stomach. The following morning I felt a good deal better, but my arm was awful sore. I went on deck and found Boles nod-

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ding over the wheel. We fixed up some breakfast, and while we were eating it and discussing what it was best to do next, I spotted a sail on the horizon.

"If they come down on us now, we'll have a sure-enough fight," said I. There was a little five-knot breeze, and when I looked up again I saw that the vessel was nearer.

Boles dove below and got his glass. There were no ratlines on the shrouds, but he swarmed up the hoops, and was presently astride the gaff. He looked and looked, then put down his glass, waited a while, and then took another stare. When at length he came down, the vessel, which was a sort of little brig of about our own tonnage, was not more than four miles away. Boles' face was very serious, but there was a glitter in his eyes.

"Knapp," he said, "do you remember the yarn that I spun for you on the Peak?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I verily believe that yonder brig is the one that belonged to McKim and me. And did you notice how she swung 'way down out of her course to look us up? I'm very much afraid that their motives are other than those of Christian charity."



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I got on my feet and swung my game arm stiffly back and forth.

"How does it feel?" he asked anxiously.

"Pretty stiff, but I guess I can use it all right."

"Well, if necessary, you can operate the Maxim. That's worth a dozen rifles. I'll work the six-pounder, and have a few rifles at hand."

It was ticklish work standing there, just the two of us, and watching that howling mob bearing down on us with everything drawing, and I'll confess I was pretty well scared. Boles, however, looked perfectly radiant, and when, presently, she tacked so as to cross our bows, he fairly skipped with joy.

"What did I tell you!" he shouted. "I said she was pieced in the side. Look there—just under her main chains—see the difference in the colour where the new piece was let in. Oh, you blackguards!"

They did not keep us long in suspense. Just as she filled away there came two puffs of smoke from her waist, and a minute later a solid shot ricocheted across our bows. The other flew high.

"Wait till I give the word, Knapp!" said Boles joyously. "They'll put their helm up in a minute and run down. Then we'll let 'em have it. I can pick

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the sticks out of her with this trick, and you can clean down her decks as if you had a hose!"

As she crossed our bows she fired again, but the shot went wide. We were close-hauled on the port tack, and she was running across our course close-hauled on the starboard. Suddenly Boles put his helm hard up so as to pay her off and get a full sweep with the six-pounder, which was on the port side. At the same moment the brig's people put their helm hard a-starboard and swung in after us. Then I saw the point of Boles' stratagem, for now we could rake them fore and aft, and, even if they wanted to, they could not very quickly get away from us, and, best of all, they were unable to use their guns, as they would be unable to train them far enough forward.

Several of them came running up into the bows with rifles in their hands and long knives thrust through their belts.

"Now, Knapp," sung out Boles, "let 'em have it!"

There came a roar from the six-pounder, and a great splinter from the foot of the brig's foremast flew high in the air. At the same moment I opened up with my Maxim and played a deadly stream up and down her decks. There came another roar, and

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the waist of the brig seemed a mass of flying splinters. We found afterwards that the shell had torn up the deck-planking from rail to rail.

If a submarine volcano had suddenly turned itself loose under that vessel when she was sailing alone over a quiet sea, I doubt if they could have been more surprised. They simply went all to pieces.

I had bowled over the man at the wheel, and no one had presence of mind enough to take his place, so that the brig, which, for a wonder, carried a weather-helm, began to come into the wind. Then suddenly Boles scored a bull's-eye and away went her foremast, carrying with it her maintopmast, and then we had her at our mercy. Some of her crew, under the impression that she was sinking, manned one of the boats and pulled away. These we allowed to go unmolested, glad to be rid of them. There were about twenty in all, and of these six were killed outright, and four badly hurt. There were only three sound men left aboard, and these were absolutely cowed.

We sent a couple of shells after the crowd in the boat, just to encourage them to good brisk oarsmanship. I suppose we really should have killed them all; but, as Boles said, "If you were to kill a China-

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man just because he was a thief and a scoundrel, you might as well exterminate the whole race and be done with it. The good Lord probably intended them for some hidden purpose of his own—only it's mighty well hidden."

When the boat was well gone, we ran cautiously alongside the brig, and made fast to her. Then we drove the three coolies down into our forecastle, and fastened the hatch. The injured ones we fixed up as well as we could for the time being, and hauled out of the way. I stood guard while Boles dropped below to take a look around. This was an anxious moment for me, as I didn't know what he might strike down there. Five minutes later he came up with a beaming face.

"Opium," said he—"lots of it—I thought so from the smell—and silks, and what looks to be some very good tea. She's a professional freebooter all right. I think that's what they wanted her for. I lost her right in here, you know," he nodded towards the land which we could dimly make out in the distance.

"Now," he said, "suppose we get our friends down below there to transfer cargo. After that we'll just blow the other stick out of this old hooker, and put our pirate friends back aboard to look after their

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wounded. They're lucky to get off at that, and they'll know it, but we can't afford to have them spinning yarns until we dispose of our cargo."

"And where will that be?" I asked.

"In Amoy—as per papers. We'll just say that we got run into, and chased by pirates, and are sick of the business. Then we'll sell out cheap, and no questions asked. That part's easy enough."

Well, we did it just about like that. There were one or two funny incidents connected with it, but they are immaterial. In the end Boles and I shared up about six thousand apiece, and a few pearls not yet disposed of that Boles persuaded the Chinese captain, who was one of our prisoners, to tell him about. Never mind how.

We never saw Grogan nor Alvarez again, but I have since heard a funny story that leads me to suppose that they were picked up and worked their way around the Horn in the fore-castle of a wind-jammer.

We got a receipt for the schooner, and got our deposit back. The rest of it is waiting for Alvarez and the politician.

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**J**ORDAN KNAPP and I met in rather a peculiar way. We were thrown together by accident, and with such force that I was knocked on my beam-ends, and he, fouling some of my running rigging with his foot, tripped and took a header into an empty 'rickshaw standing by the curb and smashed it as flat as a pancake.

Then for a moment there was an all-round mix-up. Two or three little Jap policemen jumped on Knapp and got the strangle hold. A Yankee sailorman that was lounging past leapt into the mess and knocked over a couple of native spectators who seemed inclined to lend the policemen a hand, and a very irate and tousled shopkeeper with a cut over his eye dashed suddenly from the little shop and began to whack *me* with a carved bamboo stick. Then, to lend a touch of romance to the situation, a very pretty and stylishly dressed English girl came running from the same shop, and, armed with a parasol, made a flank attack on my assailant that diverted him sufficiently to let me get on my feet and knock him down.

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By this time Knapp had got himself together, and having slung the policemen to right and left, stood towering in the middle of an admiring and respectful circle, like an old bull buffalo surrounded by wolves. The sailor had got hold of one of the shafts of the 'rickshaw, and was swinging it back and forth, admiring the glitter of the silver bands, and telling the crowd, in fluent and profane Irish-American, of the variety of mutilations that he would inflict for a very slight consideration. I turned to my fair rescuer to thank her for her timely aid, but she suddenly burst into tears.

"It was all my fault," she sobbed, "papa told me that these nasty little Japs would swindle one if they got a chance, but I did *so* want a set of those lovely little whist counters——"

"Excuse me," I said, "but would you mind telling me what all the row is about? Perhaps I can help you."

Knapp overheard me and strode over to where we were standing, scattering the crowd right and left as he came.

"*I'll* tell you!" he said; "I reckon that I'm going to need the most help, from the looks of things. I

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went into that darn store to buy some little gewgaw to send to my sister-in-law, and while I was waiting I heard that little skunk (pointing to the proprietor) getting mighty fresh to this lady. She had ordered some of these whist counters,—the kind that snap up on end,—and had paid for them in advance. When she called to get them just now she found that some of them wouldn't work. Naturally she wanted him to fix 'em the way he'd allowed to, and then he got sassy and said something he'd no business to, so I just reached for him by the scruff of the neck, and gave him a shake or two to teach him United States manners. Well, he hollered and the police came in, and if we've left anything of that store it must be all on the outside. Finally I tripped and come out head first, and if I hadn't lit in that baby-carriage, I calculate I might have cashed in. Now, never you mind at all, miss," he went on, turning to the girl; "just you take your counters and trot along. This is my row, and I calculate to get out of it without losing any more hair."

I put the girl in her 'rickshaw, and she weepingly departed with her purchase. Then I turned to Knapp. The police had got reinforcements, and were



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drawing up in a way that boded further trouble. The sailor was leaning on his shaft and delivering a drunken oration.

"I'll see you through this thing, if you don't mind," said I, "because I think you acted just right, and I may be able to help you. My name's Brown, and I'm from New York."

"Shake!" he said, holding out a big sinewy fist, and giving me a grip that made me squirm. "My name's Knapp, and I'm from New London."

"Good," said I; "now let's get in a 'rickshaw and go to police headquarters. Then we'll see what we can do."

"All right!" said he—"so long as they don't try to lay hands on us."

We made a very imposing procession. First came a couple of policemen, then Knapp and a policeman or two, then myself, followed by the shopkeeper and more policemen. The sailor brought up the rear, refreshing himself at intervals, and singing a coon song. We lost him before we had got very far.

When we reached headquarters I sent a note to an English resident of the place who was a friend of mine, and of some influence in the city. He soon

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arrived, and Knapp and I explained the difficulty.

"That's easily fixed," said he, and harangued the shopkeeper for a while. The man did not seem very well satisfied, but finally said something to the police captain, who turned to us and said that the complaint had been withdrawn, but that he would have to fine us five dollars for breach of the peace, and resisting an officer, or some such rot. The Japs are really getting very civilised. I expect it will not be very long now before they get police corruption, just like New York. My friend told us that he had impressed the shopkeeper with the idea that if he pressed the charge it would result in a boycott of his shop by foreigners.

Knapp cheerfully paid the fine, and we departed with much ceremony and many bows. He wanted to go right back to the Benten Dori and parade around, but I persuaded him to return peaceably to the Grand, where he told me that he was stopping. He wouldn't let me go, however, until I had promised to lunch with him the following day.

When I went around to the hotel the following noon, I found Knapp in the billiard room, deep in an emphatic argument on the silver question, with a

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hirsute compatriot from Kansas. He was illustrating the point of his remarks by frequent reference to a much scarred and battered Mexican dollar which lay in the palm of his hand, and making constant reference to the various stamps of the different banking houses with which it was indented to prove its genuineness. The moment he caught sight of me he forgot his argument, and, striding over, gave me one of those grips which I had already learned to dread.

"Just waiting for you, and trying to convert this damn-fool Hoosier to sound money in the meanwhile," he said. "Let's have lunch at one. Boles 'll be back then, and I want you to meet him."

"Who's Boles?" I asked.

"Oh, he's my partner—in a way," he answered vaguely. "He'll be back in a little while. Play pool?"

"Yes," I answered; "I'm fairly good at most useless accomplishments."

"That sounds like Boles," he said a little curiously. "What is your business, Mr. Brown, if you don't mind my asking?"

"Not a bit. I'm a painter—an artist," said I, seeing that he looked a little puzzled.

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“ You don’t say—now who would have thought it; why do you know I sized you up as a keen business man—a promoter or something like that? Did you come ’way out here to paint pictures? ”

“ Yes, partly, and partly for the trip.” I saw that he was dying to ask me if I was a man of independent means, but with all of his Yankee practicality, Knapp was a man of more than a little tact and delicacy, as I afterwards discovered.

The marker set up the balls and Knapp broke safe. Now, if there is any one place where I do excel, it’s at a billiard or pool table. Without boasting, I can honestly say that I have seldom struck the amateur that could beat me on a long score. Probably the man never lived who could not excel in some particular direction if he only was fortunate enough to find out, first, wherein his talent lay, and second, to make the most of it when discovered. I take naturally to the ivories, and knowing that I’m good at this one thing if at nothing else, I don’t hesitate to say so in advance. I’m not one of those star players who say how useless they are, and then beat a man all to pieces and make him feel badly. Those chaps usually spot a man about fifteen balls, beat him at

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that, and then apologise for being in such poor form.

Knapp and I played three full strings in—well, never mind how many minutes. I was in my very best form, and he has since told me that he was also. Before we had been at it long we had all the loungers in the hotel around the table. Neither of us could seem to miss a shot, and when one began to play the other would sit down and light a fresh cigar. Knapp would sprawl that great frame of his across the table,—he never once used the bridge,—his big deeply lined features would freeze for a moment, while his keen grey eye glanced around the cushions, then he would shoot, and the ball would glance or carom to its pocket as straight as a die.

I beat him every string by one point, which really is no beat at all. We sat down amid a murmur of applause, and chatted for a while. He said that I was the first man that had ever beaten him three straight strings, but he was not at all sore, because he said that he had never played better pool in his life.

Knapp had his back to the door and I was facing him. While we were talking, a man came to the door and took a quick survey of the room. He was a fine-

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looking chap, of about middle age, with a strong athletic-looking figure, and a face that combined force of will with intellectuality and culture; the face of a general after a long, hard campaign, or that of an explorer who carries in his mind the ineradicable pictures of untold horrors. I was so fascinated by him that I forgot to listen to what Knapp was just then saying. He noticed my preoccupation and looked around to discover the cause.

“ Why, there’s Dr. Boles now ! ” he exclaimed.

The doctor saw us then, and came quickly over. I noticed that everyone turned to look at him again as he passed. He was really a strikingly handsome man, but it wasn’t that which compelled attention as much as the hard, masterful expression about his mouth and eyes. Still, when all was said, I do not think that his personality seemed any stronger than that of the big New Englander beside me, only that of the doctor was more concentrated. Taking them together, I thought, they were a combination with which few would venture to meddle.

Knapp introduced us in his careless, offhand way, and Dr. Boles gave me his hand with a smile that was singularly winning.

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"Mr. Knapp told me of the good turn you did him yesterday," he said; "I'm very glad to meet you, because otherwise there was danger of my getting tired of hearing about you."

"And now he's got a fresh grip on me by knocking me out at pool," Knapp cut in.

"Did you beat him at pool?" said the doctor in surprise. "Good; these Yankees need a setback once in a while to keep them where they belong."

"And you darned Britishers need an all-fired yank by the collar to keep you up in the front of the procession—where you *don't* belong," said Knapp.

It was always that way. Boles was forever getting in some really unnecessary thrust, to which Knapp would respond by a retort as rough and jagged and abrupt as the rock-bound hills from which he came, but they never carried it beyond that. There were never two men, I am sure, who respected one another more and approved one another less.

I don't think that I have ever enjoyed a luncheon more than I did that day. Aside from the interest which their characters afforded, both men were full of anecdote and reminiscence of the most fascinating description, the Englishman talking in a quiet and

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often very instructive manner, and the Yankee presenting people and incidents in a half-humourous way, striking in similes and antithetical comparisons, and despite his humour, or perhaps because of it, endowing the listener with his own shrewd power of analysis and observation. One of the most conspicuous qualities of his conversation was the constant thread of loyalty to his own place and people that was woven throughout his whole discourse. He did not say that there were no places in the world that could take precedence in usefulness or beauty over his own little "Nutmeg State"; he simply conveyed the idea that if there were such places, he had yet to see them, and that if he *did* see them he would want someone to tell him of it at the time, as otherwise he doubted that he would know it.

When we had finished luncheon we went out on the verandah in front, where we had a smoke and a talk, and watched the shore boats and sampans plying back and forth from the different vessels to the beach. One of the big Maru steamers was coming up the bay, and we watched her long, trim, yacht-like hull slip swiftly up to its berth. Launches were bouncing back and forth from the men-o'-war, little sails twinkled nimbly



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in and out behind the great resting seafarers, and the whole scene was so filled with life and colour that I became distrait in contemplation of it all. Boles' voice roused me.

"What are your favourite subjects, Mr. Brown? I suppose I ought to know, but we globe-trotters and exiles soon lose track of the arts of peace—eh, Knapp?"

"I paint marines chiefly," said I, a little nettled. It really seemed as if he ought to have heard something of my academy picture of the beach at Mogi.

"You don't say. Been a great deal at sea, I presume."

"On the contrary," said I, "the voyage out here is the only sea trip that I have ever taken."

Boles looked surprised, then thoughtful.

"I don't see how a man can properly translate the sea until he has seen it from every point of view, in every phase, in all of its different moods. I have spent much of my life upon the sea, but I learn something new about it with every meeting—and probably always will."

"I have seen the ocean in all its moods, I think—from the shore," said I.

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“ Ah, from the shore—but that is quite different. There you get the sight, but not the feeling, of the sea. To be sure, where the waves break they are most furious, but one feels their impotence. That is not the feeling of the sea. That is simply the feeling of the land. On the deep sea, 'way off soundings, there seems no limit to its power. Along the shore it is trammelled. It is the difference between seeing a tiger in a cage and seeing him slipping toward you through the striped jungle-grass. No—to paint a great picture of the sea you must have seen it from the wet, slippery, slanting deck of a small sailing vessel, with the glass and the sun going down and the wind and the sea rising. Your head must have reeled with the quick, swooping plunge from the crest of one great swell to the trough of the next; your face must have stung with the lash of the spray, and your ears rung with the scream of the wind aloft, while the salt brine trickles down into your mouth. Then you may carry away in your heart a picture that will make you famous with a fame that will live forever!”

He leaned forward on the arms of the chair and looked at me with parted lips and sparkling eyes. It

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was easy to guess the name of this man's mistress. Even Knapp seemed interested.

"Yes," he said, nodding; "I guess the doctor's about right—and think of the money you'd get for pictures with all that in 'em."

Boles gave a short laugh. "Yes," he said, "I forgot that—think of the money."

"What you say is very true," I answered, "and I have often realised it in my work. Art, of course, is not reproduction, it is interpretation; and one can't interpret what one has never felt, as you say. For that reason I have never attempted what you might call a deep-sea painting. My work has all been along the shore."

"Then I think that I can safely predict that you will never be quite contented until you have tackled Old Ocean in her unfettered might," said Boles with a smile.

"I believe you are right," I answered. "In fact, I have several times been on the verge of taking a voyage on a sailing ship, but every time something has happened at the last moment to prevent me, or else I have lost my nerve about it."

"Why?"

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"Oh, I don't know. The dread of the unknown probably, and then I'm a poor sailor."

"You'd soon get over that. And it would do you a world of good. Pardon me if I seem personal, but you look as if you had been bent over an easel too much of late. An artist of any sort—a painter or writer or musician—has as much need of flesh and blood as a blacksmith. Think of the vitality that goes into a Turner, or a book like 'Les Misérables,' or the Liebestod from 'Tristan und Isolde.' Why, man, after the nor'east monsoon had blown through your brain for a fortnight, and you had watched the great mellow tropic moon rise out of a silent starlit sea, you could paint pictures such as you never dream of now, I don't care how good your work."

"Better chuck your duds into your kit and come along with us," said Knapp.

"Go with you where?" I asked in surprise

"Knapp has anticipated me as usual," said the doctor. "It's like this, Mr. Brown. We've got a tight little schooner that we picked up at quite a bargain, and we've just finished fitting out for a trading cruise around the Philippine Archipelago. I have done a good deal of that sort of thing, and understand the

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business, and we are both old sailormen. I've got four big crates of trading junk that a friend of mine, who is the captain of a transport, brought out from the States and has left in Manila for me—condemned cutlery, gewgaws, Yankee notions, beads, and all that sort of truck. We will get a Chino cook and a couple of Filipino boys to pull and haul and run aloft, but we want another white man, more for company than anything else. If you want to come along as our guest I'll guarantee to teach you practical seamanship. You would be under no obligation to us whatever, as you could spell us when we wanted to go ashore together for any reason, and do not want to leave the schooner with the boys."

Knapp nodded. "Yes," he said, "and if you want to take a little share in the venture, just to give you an interest in the game, why we're perfectly agreeable—but do just as you please about that."

I looked from one to the other in much perplexity and doubt.

"Gentlemen," said I, "this is a very generous proposition, but it is so unexpected that I don't just know how to regard it——"

"Well," drawled Knapp, "let's put it on a business

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basis, then you can tell better how you stand. Boles and I have got this schooner and we're going to run over to Manila and get our trading stuff, and then take a cruise around the open ports of the southern islands of the group, on the lookout for a cargo of hemp, which is 'way up just now—tobacco, coffee, copra, curios, pearls, silks, piño, or any darn thing we can lay hands on at a reasonable bargain. Some of the time we'll both want to go ashore, and as we don't want to leave the vessel with only the natives aboard, we want another white man to take charge when we're away. Or perhaps we might want him to attend to something ashore. Afloat you can take your trick or not—just as you choose. And as I said, if you want to take a little share in the thing, why go ahead. The rest of the time you can paint and sketch, and potter around to your heart's content."

"It sounds very attractive," said I. "Do you mind if I think it over and let you know to-morrow?"

"Not a bit; rather you would, in fact. We expect to clear in three days."

"Very well," said I; "then I'll leave you now, and meet you here in the morning?"

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“All right—and mind you make your plans to come,” said Knapp. “Good-bye!”

I left them in rather a dazed condition, and went back to my studio. At first I had no idea whatever of accepting the proposition; first, because I knew nothing of the men, but chiefly because I am of an æsthetic rather than adventurous disposition, and the thought of crossing the China Sea and cruising for an indefinite period in unknown waters, and amidst hostile and savage people, was rather terrifying. But what Dr. Boles had said about my art had struck a very responsive chord, and really, when I come right down to it, I believe I have more physical courage than I realise. Knapp has since told me that when things really look threatening I am “as sandy as a bull-pup.”

Another reason for my wanting to go was on account of what the doctor had said about my physical condition and appearance. I had been a little worried about myself for the last month, as I seemed to have got into a sort of acute nervous condition, which I attributed to overwork, and perhaps a few more Scotch-and-sodas than I really required. But, worst of all, I could no longer deny that the quality of my

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work was deteriorating, and rather than that I would go to almost any extreme.

The next morning, however, all of my misgivings returned, and a lot of new ones besides. By the time that I reached the hotel I had finally made up my mind to call the thing off. Boles met me on the verandah.

"Good-morning!" he said cheerily. "Well, I see you have decided to go with us."

"Eh—yes," said I; "I've decided to go," and then I felt much better. Although I had known these two men but a day, I instinctively gave them my confidence. And I was greatly reassured by the knowledge that if I did get sick there was a doctor right at hand, upon whose strength I felt that I could lean. Knapp had told me that Dr. Boles had once been a surgeon of considerable prominence in London, and that he had given up his profession owing to some discredit that was brought upon him on account of his having once performed a daring and original operation on some case without the knowledge or consent of the family. The patient died, and the doctor was so severely censured that he gave up the practice of his profession, and had since led a wandering life.



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Knapp came in shortly, and when he learned that I had made up my mind to go, held out his hand, but I had learned better than to put my own into that jaw-trap, so we went in and had a drink instead. Of course I had no desire to take any share in the enterprise, as I have as much money as I am ever likely to need, but I stocked our lockers well up with the best bottled hardware there was to be had in Yokohama. I did not think that Dr. Boles was any too keen about my contribution to the mess, and I was rather glad of it on the whole, though I had already seen that neither he nor Knapp were what might be called drinking men.

We sailed the last of that week, and, as I had expected, for the first twenty-four hours my life wasn't worth a dead fish. Time and again I was on the point of offering Knapp and Boles any price they wanted, even to the point of buying the schooner outright, to set me back on the beach. But I managed to refrain, both from pride and from the strong premonition that they wouldn't do it for any price. When finally I managed to crawl on deck the second day I was forced to acknowledge that Boles was right in saying that there was a lot for me to feel and see before I would be able to catch the spirit of the sea, but before I

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had been on deck an hour I began to think more kindly of the long stretch ahead of us, also of an egg and a cup of coffee.

The northeast monsoon was blowing a piping twenty-knot breeze over our starboard quarter, and the schooner was tearing along under a jib, fore-staysail, foresail, and mainsail, with her port scuppers almost awash, and the big following seas swelling high under her stern as they boosted her along. Knapp wanted to set the maintopsail, but Boles said that she was trimmed by the head as it was, and he pointed out how she would bury her bows when she yawed off with a big sea under her stern. At the time I did not understand any of those things, but Boles began my nautical education just as soon as I was able to get around, and it wasn't long before I knew that schooner as I know my box of colours. She certainly was a beauty, and as I grew wiser in shiplore I saw why Boles had bought her in Yokohama and sailed her to Manila in preference to getting one of the dumpy wind-scows used in and about the latter place. She was of the regular island type of schooner, but rather smaller than most of them, and had been built for a yacht.

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The next morning the monsoon was roaring away with about the same velocity and almost in the same quarter, and Boles said that it would probably carry us right down to the eastern coast of Luzon without shifting or dropping. The fourth day out we sighted some of the Loo Choo Islands, and from that time on sighted some land almost every day. If the glass had commenced to drop, we would have made more easting so as to get out of their neighbourhood, but there was never a sign of bad weather or any of those terrific typhoons that, in certain seasons, sweep down just in the course that we were taking. On the sixth day we sighted the island of Formosa, or Tai Wan, which was ceded to Japan by China in 1895. Three days later the coast of Luzon loomed up early in the morning on our port bow. From there on we had variable winds, and not until four days later did we sight Merivalles Mountain, which lies at the entrance to Manila Bay, and which, for some reason or other, Boles cursed heartily. Knapp and I were glad to see it. We ran past Corregidor and up to the city, dropping our anchor behind the breakwater, and Boles immediately went in with his papers to report to the captain of the port.

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Everything was all right, so the next day we had our trading stuff towed out to us in a casco, and also stocked up our commissary again, so that by evening we were ready for sea. I very much wanted to spend a few days in the place, both on account of its historic interest, and also to make a few sketches, but, of course, all delay was a matter of dollars and cents to Knapp and Boles. The latter was ashore until after dark, and when he came off I saw that he had heard something of interest.

"Come below," he said to Knapp and me; "I have just got wind of a good thing."

We went down into the cabin, and Boles hauled some charts out of his locker and spread them on the table.

"I have just learned from a friend of mine ashore, who is in a good position to know all about these things, that there is a fine, fat cargo of hemp waiting for the first comer at Mayongong, a little place in the south of Samar—ah, here it is. It seems that the port has not been opened yet, but there will be no difficulty in our getting the stuff if we can only manage to reach there before a certain little brigantine that left here yesterday on the same errand. There

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is a handsome commission on it if we win out, and not much lost if we don't. Now, what do you say? shall we have a go at it? Strictly speaking, it's against the law; but the offence is only a technical one."

I looked at Knapp, who grinned.

"That seems to be our specialty, doc—to correct these fool regulations. Let's have a go at it. It'll be easy enough to pick up a little more somewheres else and change the figures on the manifest."

"No," said Boles, "we can't do that exactly, but I think I know how we can arrange it all right. Well, on the jump, boys—we're cleared and can't afford to waste any time. These little coasting coffins are slow as death and nothing like as sure, but a day's a big start, and it's only a matter of five hundred miles or so. We'll have our chin when we get under way."

He jumped up through the companionway, we right behind him, and the next moment he was hammering on the scuttle of the forehatch to break out our three native boys, while Knapp and I set to work casting off the stops of the foresail. After that I swarmed out on the bobstays and cleared the jib, while

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the Chings manned the windlass and Knapp and Boles started to get the foresail on her. When they got the chain short up, all hands of us lay aft on the main-sail halliards, and I'll bet that the big sail had never before gone up so quickly. Boles took the wheel and the rest of us manned the windlass and broke out the anchor, and then I ran up the jib and hauled it flat. She paid off quickly before the little night breeze that is always wafted from the land in tropical countries after the sun is set, and once more we were under way. The big hospital ship loomed right across our bows as, with the wind abeam, we ran out along the breakwater, and when we passed close under her stern I could look through the windows of her deckhouses and see the doctor making his evening rounds through the clean, bright, sparkling ward, with its electric fans and lights, and beds with fresh white linen. There were some officers sitting on the hurricane deck, and we could hear their laughter and the tinkle of a mandolin. Outside the breakwater the big transports and men-o'-war were lying, blazes of light above phantom, ghost-white hulls. Far to the northward a gunboat, hull down over the horizon, was signalling with her search-light, and we could see the

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great luminous ray sweeping the heavens back and forth.

We rounded the end of the breakwater, and, slackening our sheets, stood away toward Corregidor, and soon the myriad lights of the Luneta twinkled dim and indistinct. Our topsails and staysail were quickly set, and the slap-slap of the little waves under her forefoot grew faster and faster as she gathered way. Soon the lights of the city faded, and by midnight we were drawing into the channel to the southeast of Corregidor.

The following morning we worked down along the shore past Taal, and by two o'clock were beating through the San Bernardino Channel. It was fortunate that the wind held, as I do not think that we could possibly have done it at night, and Boles would have certainly attempted it rather than anchor and wait for the dawn.

We were becalmed all the following night, for which I was duly grateful, as I had no wish to be shipwrecked on those hostile shores, but Boles fumed and swore, and Knapp whistled for the breeze, spat over the rail, and finally took to throwing pennies into the water. It is all very well to talk of the folly of super-

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stition and all that, but I have noticed that at sea the most practical of men will seek to propitiate the fickle goddess in the most childish way. Omens and hoo-doo's don't work so well on the land because there are so many cross currents to counteract them; on a great, simple element like the sea, however, they are more apt to run their course unless diverted by some counter spell. And people feel this. It must be something more than a mere idle fancy when a hard-headed, practical Yank like Jordan Knapp gets to throwing money overboard to bring a breeze, even if it is only a quarter of a cent or so.

It was of no use, however. There we lay absolutely motionless, for we were off Marinduque Island and completely land-locked, the high hills of Mindoro completely blanketing us from any breeze that might have cut in from the China Sea. Our only hope and consolation was that our unconscious adversary might have caught the same streak of calm.

The next morning we caught a nice little slant from the sou'west which, though it headed us a little, was much better than none. Boles longed to run down through the San Juanico Straits, between Samar and Leyte, and if we had only had a fair wind and tide we



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could have saved at least 150 miles by doing so. But, as it was, he decided that the risk was too great, as it is a narrow, winding place through which the tide tears like a mill-race. Besides, in many places we would have been within easy rifle range of the shore, and we had heard in Manila that the place swarmed with hostile Filipinos. So we had to go away down through the Surigao Straits.

Although Knapp and Boles were constantly chafing at the delay, the trip was a delightful one for me. I never tired of watching the bold, rugged, mountainous islets rising purple and saffron-tinted from that sparkling azure sea. The glorious tropic cloud effects of sunrise and sunset were a constant joy to me, and never have I got such impressions of high lights and half-tones as came at those quick, transient moments of maddeningly elusive tints that come between the bright, sparkling day and the soft, tropic night. I made studies galore, and having the true artistic spark—as I think—glowed and expanded under the warm praise of both of my companions. My most enthusiastic critics, however, were our little Jap sailors, who, when Boles was below, would often sneak behind me and peer over my shoul-

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der with fascinated eyes and give delighted little grunts when, with a few quick strokes, I would bring out some bold effect of light and shadow.

It was not until the sixth day after we left Manila that we entered San Pedro Bay, and drew near to our destination. I was down in the cabin shaving, because I always like to keep well "policed," as Boles calls it, even at sea, when a bellow of rage from Knapp brought me flying up the companionway, under the impression that some calamity had occurred. And apparently it had.

We were rounding the point, and there, just off the village, lay a schooner very much like our own!

## II

It was certainly discouraging. To have worked and worried as we had, won our race through dangerous and unknown waters, and then to find an unlooked-for rival already on the ground was enough to make one swear. Knapp evidently thought so.

We held a little conference, and it was decided that Knapp and I should go ashore and see how the ground lay, while Boles remained on the schooner as a sort

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of reserve. Here I was able to be of some service to my mates, as I had spent several years studying in Europe, and could speak Spanish like a native. Boles could speak good Spanish, too, but Knapp, when speaking to any foreigner, simply raised his voice to a shout, making up in volume what he lacked in intelligibility.

We dropped into our dinghy and pulled ashore in some uncertainty. A few natives came down to the beach to see us land, and seemed quiet and friendly. One of them showed us to the presidente's house. He told us on the way that the presidente was in conversation with the señors from the other vessel, which had just arrived that morning from Cebu.

As we drew near, we heard the quick patter of voices raised in argument, and occasionally a staccato laugh. Then we were discovered, for the voices ceased, and the presidente himself came out to greet us.

I wished him "good-day," and for a while we talked in a circle, exchanging compliments and felicitations. He was a rather good-looking Spanish-Visayan mestizo, and seemed a person of breeding and poise. Soon I introduced Knapp, who crumpled his paw, and

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I explained that we were Englishmen and on a little trading cruise, and hearing so much of the wealth and resource of his well-known city, as well as of the great personal charm of its presidente, we had put in while passing, to give ourselves the pleasure of paying our respects and making his acquaintance, and casually to see if, perhaps, he might happen to have a few bags of coffee, a little tobacco, or possibly some hemp, which just now was of little value owing to the cursed Americanos.

He threw both hands above his head with a gesture of despair.

“ Ah, *amigo*, why did not the blessed Virgin send you an hour earlier! It is true that the storehouse yonder is full of hemp which I have been saving for the rise in price that I thought was sure to come as a result of the interruption of the industry by these cursed Americanos. But at last I am obliged to let it go, for how otherwise can my son Emilio pursue his studies in Paris, where he has gone to become a famous artist? Already he has painted a fresco of the Passion for our cathedral, which you see across the square. This morning the *Carmen* has arrived from Cebu, and I have just agreed to deliver the hemp

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at a most ruinous price,—a half, indeed, of what it has cost me to get the crop,—but what would you have? Emilio must not go hungry.”

“Alas,” said I, “I can indeed feel for your anxiety as a parent, which does you infinite credit, also your solicitude concerning your son’s career. I also am an artist in a poor way,” and I showed him my half-filled sketch-book. He turned the leaves in great delight.

“*San Diego!*—but the señor is a great master. Seldom has it been my fortune to gaze upon such work.” Surprising as it may seem, some of these Filipinos are really exceedingly good art critics. “Oh, that my son Emilio were only here! *Sacramento!*—here is the mouth of the Pasig, and here Corregidor with the sun going down behind it—it is indeed wonderful!”

“That’s right, Brown, jockey him along,” remarked Knapp behind me. Somehow that irritated me, but it brought my mind back to the matter in hand. I led the presidente to the corner of the verandah.

“It grieves me, señor,” said I, “that Emilio might have to be disappointed in the amount of his remit-

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tance. Rather than have that happen would it not be well, perhaps, to let us have this hemp at a little higher price?"

"Ah, the English señor is indeed my friend, but it is impossible. These men are old acquaintances of mine—and desperate characters. If I were to play them false, who knows? It is possible that they might burn my village!"

I held a short conference with Knapp, in which I told him what I had learned. His mouth puckered, and he drew his great brows together in thought. Then his face expressed a sudden inspiration.

"Ask him when he's got to deliver the cargo," he said. I did so.

"To-night," replied the Spaniard; "as soon as the coolies can bring the cascotes down the river, which will be at about ten o'clock."

"Ask him if he minds telling you how much he is to get for his darn hemp," Knapp said again.

The señor hesitated a moment, but thinking no doubt that it really made no difference since the stuff was as good as sold, told me. The price was indeed ridiculously small. In confirmation, he showed me a roughly drafted contract from the owners of the

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schooner to pay the money down as soon as the hemp should be delivered on board. This I showed to Knapp, who studied it carefully.

"Now, kid," he said at length excitedly, "is the chance for you to get in your fine work. Tell this old greaser that, although disappointed in getting our cargo, we bear no ill-will, and invite him and these other greasers out aboard to lunch. Tell 'em we've got a bully cook, and the best booze that money can buy. They'll come—or greasers are a lot different in this part of the world than they are anywhere else. Then we'll go back aboard and talk to Boles. I've got a plan—just listen to that!" A roar of boisterous laughter came from the house. "Said they'd burn his village, did he? We'll teach 'em—the bloodthirsty pirates."

I failed utterly to follow his train of thought, but did as he told me. The presidente was apparently delighted.

"The señor honours me; it would afford me the greatest pleasure. And if the señors will condescend to enter my poor house we will have a flask of Madeira, and you shall meet these others—the ladrones that they are. But you must not be offended if they are

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somewhat noisy, for they have just finished two bottles of my best."

With some ceremony he showed us up the stairs, for the house, like most of the more pretentious Filipino dwelling-houses, was of the Spanish style of architecture, having the entrance for vehicles under the dwelling portion. As we went up the steps there came another roar of laughter from the parlour, followed by the crash of breaking crockery. A look of agony came over the face of our host.

"Ah, the pigs! they are not satisfied to ruin me in purse, but must demolish my dwelling as well. *Madre de Dios*—but listen to them!"

It was evident that our competitors were getting pretty well along. As we entered the room we saw a picture that reminded me of some of the tales of the early buccaneers that I was so fond of reading as a boy. One of the Spanish traders, a big, hairy, muscular brute of most villainous countenance, had captured a pretty little Filipina, or, I expect more probably, mestiza girl, who, from her marked resemblance to our host, I strongly suspected of a blood-relationship to him. He was holding her tightly clasped in one big knotted arm, pinning her arms to her side,



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while with the other he unsteadily jammed a goblet of rum to her lips. The other scoundrel, a wiry, cadaverous, wicked-looking devil, was holding her round little chin in his skinny, hairy paw, while the other was wrapped two or three times around a rum-puncheon that he held in his lap. As we came in he raised this above the frightened girl's head.

"*Eh bueno*," he snapped; "if the little fool refuses to take the sacrament, then must we baptise her," and with these words he emptied the fiery stuff on the poor girl's head so that it ran down into her eyes and made her scream with pain. I felt our poor host's hand close on my arm with an agonised grip while an involuntary gasp of anguish escaped from his lips. It was more than I could stand, and I leaped forward to do I don't know what, but Knapp's iron grip fell on my shoulder and pinned me in my tracks.

"Hold on, kid," he said in a most peculiar voice, "sit tight and keep your eye on the ball, as Boles says. These swill-tubs 're going to pay for this before we get through with them or I'm a Frenchman. But there's no hurry. Do as I tell you now and try not to give yourself away."

It was hard work, but with a voice that choked a

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little in spite of me, I spouted a few compliments, and invited the scoundrels off to dinner that noon. They accepted effusively, but my patience was about gone, so telling them that we would look for them, Knapp and I left. When we were walking back to our boat, I turned to him, my voice trembling with suppressed anger.

“Now, for Heaven’s sake, will you tell me why you want that slime out on our schooner? If that kind of thing is to be my job, you’d better look around for a new boy right off.”

He grinned and patted me on the shoulder.

“Don’t you worry, sonny, you’ll have a chance to get even before you’re many hours older. Your Uncle Jordan’s got a plan, a little scheme to teach these gents a lesson—and get that hemp at the same time, just by way of illustration. It ’ll be a sort of illustrated lecture on the folly of intemperance.” He laughed softly.

He didn’t speak again until we got out aboard. Then we went below and told Boles of all that had happened. Before I had finished a light came into his eye and he began to grin as Knapp was doing. But it was a grin that showed his teeth a bit.

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“Savvy?” said Knapp, when I had finished.

“I think so,” said Boles, “but it’s a slightly dangerous game, and we’ve got no right to mix Brown up in it without his permission.” He turned to me. “Knapp’s scheme is this, Brown: to get these two scoundrels off here and lay the keel for a jag—a sea-going jag that will last for twelve hours or so. Then, when they’re well sewed up, to take ’em back aboard their schooner and leave them. In the meanwhile we’ll do a little financiering with the presidente, and make it worth his while to have his shipping-clerk, or whoever has charge of the loading, being foully deceived by us, mistake our schooner for the Spaniards’, and deliver the stuff to us. The presidente’s agent will receive from me the sum agreed upon, for which he will receipt. He has never seen either of our friends, so it will be easy for me to impersonate the Spanish captain. You and Knapp will have to be the reception committee and entertain our friends while I have a chin-chin with the señor. Of course he runs a little risk, but he is paid for that, and a few pesos to the Spaniards will square things. In case there is any delay in loading, or getting out of this hole to-morrow morning, it is easily possible that we

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may have a little fight on our hands. Now what do you say? ”

What was I to say? What would any man with a spark of spirit have said? And really, as I believe I remarked before, I am by no means devoid of physical courage when I feel that I am in the right. Although small in stature, and if I have led a life of ease and luxury, and more or less coddling until my aunt died a year ago, I have always felt that, under certain conditions, I might really become a very dangerous man. Knapp thinks I might, and even Boles has complimented me at times on not being afraid. Besides, the thought of that mestiza girl was smouldering inside me, and I wanted to see the brutes that had maltreated her get their deserts. I didn't quite like the hemp part of it, but of course Boles and Knapp weren't on a yachting trip, if I was.

“ As far as I'm concerned, go ahead,” said I; “ entertaining's my long suit, and if I *can't* beat that hairy gorilla to death as I'd like to, perhaps I can drink him to death, or into 'D. T.'s.”

I dodged the slap on the shoulder that I saw coming from Knapp.

“ That's the talk, youngster. We'll make a roar-

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ing buccaneer of you yet. Now let's unlimber for the fray."

A little after twelve we saw our guests making their way uproariously down to the beach, and a few minutes later their outrigger was alongside. Although they had been hard at it all the morning, they had by no means reached the limit of their capacity. At first they were a little reticent, but after emptying a glass or two of cognac to our better acquaintance, and finding that Boles and I could chatter with them neck and neck, they threw off their reserve and became the brutal wild animals that they were. I really felt sorry for the poor presidente, who, although the ancestors on his mother's side may have been head-hunters and perhaps cannibals, was still very much of a gentleman in his manners, and seemed sorely embarrassed for the behaviour of his friends.

After we had drunk a bottle of cognac, I remarked that it was very hot below, and, rising, suggested that we go on deck and sit under the awning. The two Spaniards followed me, and as the second one came up the ladder, looking back, I saw Boles lay a detaining hand upon the shoulder of the presidente, who had risen to follow. Taking my cue from this, I

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jawed my loudest, encouraging them to do the same, which was not difficult, as the brandy, on top of all the wine they had drunk that morning, seemed to act as sort of a spur to their powers of conversation.

Pretty soon Boles and the presidente came on deck, and I could see from the thoughtful air of the latter that the doctor had been sounding him a little, though I felt quite sure that he had not made any definite proposition. Boles told me afterwards that his idea was simply to suggest a train of thought that would give the señor the opportunity to broach the subject himself later on. Of course, in that case, we would be in a better position to make a bargain. At any rate, it served to keep him sober and thoughtful.

Our Chinese cook gave us a very good dinner indeed, and, from the way those two swine laid into the "chow," I began to doubt if the capture of the hemp would pay for the hole they made in the stores.

We went rather easy on the drink, as it would not do to put them out of commission too early in the day. About eight bells, however, Boles rose and told them that, as a proof of the ineffable joy it gave him to meet three such distinguished men and charming companions, he was going to give himself the great pleas-

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ure of compounding a "British Navy punch" in their honour. With that he raked out a bowl and a bottle of about every different kind of liquor we had in our wine-locker, and set to work. What he put in that foul decoction I know, because I know about what we had, but the proportions will always remain a dark secret. When finished, it was a rather pleasant and harmless enough tasting prescription, but, as Knapp afterward said, "It was sighted for five thousand yards, and ten drops was a dose for an adult." Boles served it out in long whiskey-and-soda goblets. Of course if Knapp and I had had any sense we would have gotten rid of ours over the side, but, somehow, that struck me as unsportsmanlike, and he afterwards said that he felt the same way. As for Boles himself, nothing short of sulphuric acid could have ever put his steady head on the bias.

We stuck at it, drink for drink, for about four rounds, and then the blow fell. We seemed suddenly to have run into a fogbank—then it cleared a bit and I saw the two Spaniards dancing furiously up and down, locked in one another's arms—and wondered how they ever managed to do it with the schooner on her beam ends. Thereupon I was lost in admiration

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for their cleverness, and wanted to go over and embrace them, as they weren't such bad fellows after all! But when I got up, a swell must have gotten under her, for the deck rose with me. About this time I discovered that I was very warm and perspiring freely, so the joyous idea occurred to me to take a swim, and with that object in view I hastily began to divest myself of my clothes, but a sudden heave of the vessel, coming most inopportunately while I was standing on one leg to pull the other through my trousers, upset me and I went over into the scuppers—wonderful how soft the deck was—I had never noticed it before! I dimly overheard Boles saying to the presidente: “And then Emilio might take a course at Juliens——” I felt very tired, and the last impression that I was conscious of was of Knapp leaning back in his chair and bawling at the top of his lungs:

*“I cracked my whip and the leader spr-u-n-g,  
And the off horse broke the wagon tongue.”*

. . . . .

When I awoke, it seemed to me that I had just gone over Niagara Falls, and was about to enter the rapids. I rose suddenly upright, and it did not need the thump



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that I gave my head on the deck above to remind me that I had one. Knapp was standing beside my bunk with a grin on his face and an empty bucket in his hand. Behind was Boles, wearing a worried look.

"How do you feel?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, not so bad; I'm more used to this kind of hardship," said I, beginning to "take notice."  
"What time is it?"

"Six o'clock."

"Morning or evening?"

"Morning," he answered with a bit of a smile.  
"Getting your bearings?"

"Yes," said I, thinking a bit. "We had a time, didn't we? How about the hemp?"

"Come on deck if you feel able," said he. "It's interesting up there."

I got to my feet, very dizzy and sick and sore. But it was always my curse to feel no after-effects to speak of; if I had, it would have been much better for me, I suppose. I never yet knew of a man with a weak stomach getting "D. T.'s." The companionway was a stiff proposition, but, once up, the cool air revived me.

The schooner was still at anchor, but her main and fore-sails were set, and the anchor hove short up. The

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decks were covered with long, golden-yellow hemp fibres, seeing which my eyes came open wider still.

"For the Lord's sake——" I began in amazement, but Boles tapped me on the shoulder.

"Oh, never mind that," he said. "Look over there!"

I looked, and what I saw sobered me up like a cold plunge. Just under our stern lay the schooner of our rivals, and astern of her, not a cable's length away, there lay a newcomer, a little brigantine of about our own tonnage. Her boat lay alongside the schooner, but no one was in sight. I looked aloft, then on all sides. Not a breath of air was stirring.

"The plot thickens," said I, turning to Boles.

"Well, rather. There are four white men on that new chap, and I don't know how many natives. The worst of it is that we were taking on the last of that hemp when the brig came in. Otherwise we might slip out before they got wind of what was up."

"What's to be done?" I asked.

"It's rather hard to say, but I shouldn't wonder if Knapp had the right idea."

I looked around, and there sat Knapp on the edge of the hatch cleaning a rifle.

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A noise astern of us caught our ears. We looked back and saw four men come up the after companion of the schooner. Boles levelled his glass.

"There are our friends of yesterday," he remarked, "and they act as if they were vexed about something."

My ear was caught by a little flapping noise aloft. Looking up I saw the mainsail gently stirred. Outside a dark blue streak appeared on the horizon. A puff of air caught my cheek.

"Hooray," I exclaimed; "there comes the breeze!"

"Yes," said Knapp, "and here come the greasers."

We looked astern and saw that the boat had put off from the schooner and was heading for us. The sun sparkled on some bright objects in her stern-sheets. At the same moment another boat, which we had not noticed before, left the schooner and headed for the brig.

"Heave up your hook," said Boles; "run up your headsails—quick, before that boat gets here!"

Knapp and I jumped forward, but as I went I threw a look over my shoulder and saw that the mainsail on the schooner was going up. The brig had not yet furled her canvas, having probably decided that they were

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too late. As I pulled and hauled and yelled at our Japs, I heard the clank of her windlass going round and the clink and clatter of the chain cable running through the hawse-pipe. We worked like Trojans, but the water was deep, and before the anchor came in sight Boles called Knapp and me aft. The Japs kept right on heaving. Without a word Knapp jumped below and brought up two rifles and two cartridge belts, one of which he buckled on, handing the other to me. Boles had already equipped himself.

"Now, kid," he said, "just do as your uncle Boles tells you, and don't do anything *until* he tells you.

"Lie on your bellies behind the bulwarks," said Boles, "and keep those chaps in the stern covered. You can aim through the scuppers, and if one of that crowd points a gun this way, knock him over—and don't waste any time about it."

"*Kaiya-aa matee!*" sung out one of our Japs from the bow.

Boles waved his hand aloft, and the next moment we heard the iron rings of the jib scraping along the forestay. Slowly the schooner began to pay off. But the boat was now close alongside and coming on as if they meant to board us. In the stern sat our

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gorilla-like friend and his evil-looking mate. The sight of them sent little shivers through me and down my spine, but I think that it was excitement rather than fear.

Boles hailed the boat and waved them back with his hand.

"Go back, my friends," he shouted; "we cannot receive you, as we are going out. *Adios.*"

The boat kept right on its course.

"Stop, señors!" called Boles again; "I say we cannot receive you. Another stroke at your peril!"

The boat still kept on.

"Shoot high, boys," said Boles, "about a foot over their heads. Let them feel the wind!"

Our rifles rang out, and the boat immediately held water. The gorilla rose to his feet.

"But why is this, *amigo?*" he called reproachfully. "I do not understand. We have but come to bid *adios* to our kind hosts."

"Then for what purpose are the weapons which I saw but a moment ago in the stern of the boat?" Boles replied.

The face of the gorilla underwent a change. His

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brows came down and his lips curled up with an expression of malignant ferocity.

"Ah—*Dios!*—pigs of Englishmen, you have stolen our cargo, first having poisoned us with your vile decoction."

"They're not the only ones," I said to myself.

"The señor is surely in error," answered Boles politely. "It is true that we have taken on a few bales of very poor hemp—but for all of it we have paid a good price and received a receipt. As we were stowing the last of it, I learned with deep regret that our schooner had been mistaken for yours, and it is probable that the mistake has not yet been discovered. But what would you have? Business is business, and a man must look after his own interests—is it not so?"

"Yes," replied the Spaniard, "and for that reason I will inform the señor that unless he delivers over the cargo to us, we will come and take it by force." He smiled, and his yellow teeth gleamed through his bristling moustache.

"What does he say?" demanded Knapp impatiently. "What's all this jawing about, anyway?"

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Why don't you ask 'em what they're going to do about it?"

"He's just told us," said I. "He says that we've got to give up the hemp."

Knapp scowled. "How do you say 'go to hell' in Spanish?" he asked.

"Shut up!" I answered; "I want to hear what Boles says."

The situation by this time was becoming quite exciting. The first little puff of air had dropped again, and the tide was slowly setting us down on the schooner. There were four men standing in the schooner's bows, and four more in the boat alongside, and, to make things more interesting still, the brig had weighed her anchor and was standing across our bows. If we fouled the schooner it was easy to see that the game was up; on the other hand, if we managed to keep clear of everything, we might possibly keep them from boarding until we drifted out into the zone of breeze at the mouth of the little bay.

"Brown, get our boat over and tow us out a bit to clear that schooner—quick! Knapp, you keep those scoundrels covered, and if one of them reaches for a gun, nail him!"

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I jumped to my feet and, running forward, hustled our Japs to the boat-falls, which consisted simply of a couple of light tackles and a jig hook, rigged from both mast heads. Boles was haranguing the Spaniards with honeyed words, and they seemed a little undecided as to what course to pursue. Then suddenly I saw the gorilla snatch a rifle from the thwart and throw it to his shoulder. Two reports came simultaneously. Boles staggered a little against the wheel, but the Spaniard fell with a crash across the gunwale of the boat, which promptly capsised, throwing all hands into the bay.

"Hurry up with that boat," sang out Boles.

We dropped the boat overboard, and three of the Japs tumbled into it. I quickly caught up the end of the jib halliards and threw a turn around the bobstay as we passed under it. The Japs pulled lustily, and in a minute began to swing her head out. But, better still, a faint draught of air caught her peak, and the little ripples began to play around her forefoot. I began to think that we were well out of it, when, happening to glance over our weather bow, I saw that the brig had put her helm up and was running down on us as fast as the light air would permit. To



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my uneducated eyes a collision seemed inevitable, and I started aft to get my rifle, when Boles hailed me.

“Stand by to cut that bow-line when I give the word—then get aft here as quick as you can to repel boarders! Now stand by to slack your jib-sheet!—Leggo your jib-sheet!” I cast it off the pin and let it run. The brig was not a cable’s length away and coming along with a fresh puff of the breeze in her topsails. A knot of men were gathered in her eyes.

“Cut the bow-line!—hard-a-lee!—tumble aft here! Don’t shoot—knock ’em overboard!”

The brig was almost on us as we luffed, and if they had guessed our design they could have easily jammed their helm down and fouled us, but as she was still paying off, and being a clumsy craft, we swung across their bows before they knew it. They tried to swing in after us then, but it was too late. Her starboard run struck our port quarter a glancing blow, and, as it did so, four of the men leapt down on our deck. The first, a Spaniard, fired a pistol almost in Boles’ face as he jumped, but at the same moment the bowsprit of the brig fouled the main topping-lift, though Boles had let the mainsheet run. The rope snapped, but the strain suddenly tautened the mainsheet, which

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lew up, knocking our captain over backwards into the ee scuppers. The next moment Knapp had seized he man in both of his great hands and hurled him ack against the next, a half-breed, knocking both en off their feet. I had brought the capstan brake ft with me, and, slipping past Knapp, I drove the utt of it into the next man's face.

By that time Boles had climbed to his feet and, umping across the deck, grabbed the wheel and lawed the spokes toward him as fast as he could work his arms. At the same time, Knapp had gripped the Filipino who came last by the waist and swung him up ver his head. The man screamed like a rabbit, thinking, no doubt, that he was about to be dashed lifeless n the deck, but the next moment a mighty heave sent him flying over the rail into the bay.

I was standing over the other three, swearing in panish at the top of my lungs and brandishing my apstan brake. One of them, lying almost under the wheel, started to get to his feet, but when he was almost p, Boles let drive with his fist and stretched him out gain.

Just then our little sailors, who had pulled back to he schooner as quick as they could, came running

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aft, and, under Knapp's direction, bound our prisoners' hands behind their backs. The face of my antagonist was a mass of blood, but he was conscious and swearing vigorously.

The brig was astern of us, drifting aimlessly. A boat had put off from the schooner and had picked up the capsised party, who, from the maledictions that came up to us against the wind, were far from showing the gratitude that they should have felt. I could make out the gorilla nursing one arm in the stern. Knapp afterwards told me that he had shot him through the shoulder.

Knapp looked all around him, then threw back his head and laughed.

"If that lubber hadn't upset that outfit, we might have been in bad shape," said he.

"Yes," I answered, "we'd not only have had them to look after, but the chap that went after them from the schooner. What if——"

I broke off, horror-stricken, and looked at Boles. He had fallen face downward across the wheel. On the deck beneath him was a great pool of blood. Knapp was beside him in one great stride.

"Boles!" he gasped—"old fellow! Oh, my God!"

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As if he had been a child, he picked him up in his great arms and carried him below. I put one of the lads at the wheel, motioned to the cook to watch the prisoners, and followed him.

Boles was shot in two places—one a glancing ball along the side of the head, and the other a bullet clean through the lungs. When Knapp realised that his own shot had been too late to save his friend, his grief and self-reproach were pitiful to see. But it was all unnecessary, for the doctor made a good recovery from both wounds.

When we got off the end of the point, safe from all pursuit, Knapp hove the schooner up and set the prisoners ashore, as we had no earthly use for them. I suppose they made their way back along the beach. We had made Boles as comfortable as possible, and after he came out of his faint he calmly superintended our rough attempts at a surgical dressing. Strange to say, the hole through his chest healed almost immediately, but he told me that this was very apt to be the case in wounds of this description.

Knapp was a poor hand at navigation, but under Boles' direction we managed to find Manila again in about a week. We stopped at one little place on

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the way, and got a little more hemp and some tobacco.

When we got back to Manila, I found that I really had no desire to leave the schooner, and as they were very anxious to have me stay with them, and Knapp even offered to pay me an even share, I decided to remain for a while longer. Of course I declined, in fact absolutely refused, to accept any of the money profits of the enterprise, considering myself to be more than amply repaid in the benefit to my health and the grand impetus given to my work. For a man may study, sketch, and read; but until he has laid his naked life in the hollow of the hand of the great ocean god on his own domain, he has yet to feel the Spirit of the Sea.

## OFF LUZON

**T**HERE were three of us aboard the schooner, Boles, Brown, and myself—Jordan Knapp, formerly of the Bridgeport Iron Works. Besides, there were three Filipino boys and the Chino cook.

Boles and I had been shipmates on a rather peculiar cruise up the Chinese coast, about six weeks before we bought our schooner, and while this trip had opened my eyes to many of his faults, at the same time I was obliged to admit that he was a man of his word, even if the proposition seemed a little crooked, and, as far as nerve and ingenuity were concerned, he might almost have passed for a New Englander.

We made a nice little haul on this deal, and when we were closing up the affair he suggested the scheme of our buying a little vessel, and trading around the Philippines. As his figures were very convincing, and as he had once been in the island trade, and seemed perfectly familiar with all of the details, I did a thing at which, I calculate, all of my Connecticut ancestors

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turned in their graves; that is, I put my last cent in an enterprise that I knew practically nothing about.

Just as we were about to clear, I fell foul of little Brown, who did me a good turn when I was in a sort of scrape with the local authorities. He was a nice little chap, although he had about as much business ability as a Chino has Christian charity. Boles liked him, too, and as we needed another white man in the outfit, we finally persuaded him to come along. The funny part of it was that he didn't seem to care two cents about the financial end of it; wouldn't take a share, and absolutely refused to let us pay him any salary. All he seemed to care about was to rig himself out in a tweed coat and a little red cap, get a hold of a long-handled brush, and peck away at a canvas for all the world like a woodpecker at a hollow stump. He would sling on paint of almost every colour he had in his paint locker, and make a perfect mess of it; then, while I might be trying to figure out what he was trying to make, there would suddenly rise out of the paste a great brimming comber, with others following it up, and 'way in the distance a cold, wet sky-line with ugly-looking trade-wind clouds, and perhaps the topsails of a ship behind it.

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The trouble was that, the minute a picture began to look like anything, he would quit that one and start another. I often told him that if he would only stick to one until he finished it, he might get a couple of dollars for it from some tourist with money, but it was no use, and I thought that I had never seen such a financial paralytic.

This only goes to show what a darn fool a fellow can make of himself when he gets mixing up in something he knows nothing about. One day I was devilling Brown about a sort of paint mud-pie he was making, but he took it all good-naturedly, and said that it was a "study." I said that was a good name for it, as it took right smart of study to make it out. Then, I suggested that he go up and put some of his loose paint on the forward deckhouse, as it needed a coat, and so on. At last he got up and went below, and I thought that he was mad, and began to feel sorry that I had been so humourous and witty. Pretty soon he came on deck with a newspaper clipping, and handed it to me without a word. It was from some art review, and told how the academy picture of the marine artist, Arthur Brown, had been sold to Mr. Dana Gibbs of New York for *eight hundred dollars!*



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I went right forward when I had read that, and gave the forward deckhouse a good thick coat of fresh green paint. I calculated that it was a good healthful colour for my eyes to rest on every morning when I came on deck.

That should have taught me, but it didn't. About a month later, when we were trading around the Sulu Sea, Brown used to go ashore all by himself and stay all day. Late in the afternoon he'd come aboard clean tuckered out, and lugging a grass bag full of all sorts of weeds and flowers. I talked to him real sharp for hiking around the country all alone that way, and running the risk of getting "boloed," to say nothing of sun and fever, and he seemed sorry, and promised to be more careful in future. When we got back to Manila, I went ashore with him one day, and he hunted up some old Dutch botanist that was stopping at the English Hotel, and sold him one of the weeds for one hundred and fifty dollars! Afterwards he told me that it was an orchid of a very rare variety, an *Oncidium*, I think he called it, and a kind never before found anywhere but in South America. Of course I wanted to go in for weeds altogether then, but he said that one might hunt for months with-

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out finding a really valuable specimen, so I gave it up.

The first cruise we made out of Manila was the most profitable we had, as we got a little corner on hemp down in Samar. We earned all we got, however, and came near coming out 'way behind, to say nothing of Boles getting a bullet through his lungs, and my being compelled to let daylight through a Spanish trader who, for some reason, was disposed to dispute our right to the cargo, although we had paid, and held a receipt for it. But we had no cause to complain of any trip we made, and the one I am going to tell of now paid for the schooner out and out, besides enabling us to render a service to the Stars and Stripes.

We had just got back from a little run down around Mindanao, where we had been to carry out an idea of mine of picking up a cargo of curios—knives, spears, shields, etc.—to sell to the tourists and time-expired soldiers who wanted war relics to take home to their friends. It was almost dark when we came in behind the breakwater, and dropped our hook astern of the great white hospital ship that lay there when she was in port, and always made me homesick, because I used

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to see her swinging up Long Island Sound when I went ducking out of Bridgeport in the late fall.

Brown and I took the dinghy and one of our boys, and started right in for the Captain of the Ports, leaving Boles to make things snug aboard the schooner. After we had transacted a little business, we went up to the Oriente and had a drink, and played a string or two of pool. It was about midnight when we came back down to our boat, and we had a little argument with a sentry, who seemed to look on us with suspicion, although this was after the seven-o'clock order had been annulled.

We dropped quickly down the river with the current, and struck the cut-off that runs from the Pasig into the basin behind the breakwater. There was a little brig lying just in our course to the schooner, and as we passed quietly under her stern I heard voices talking excitedly in Spanish. Brown was half asleep in the bow, when suddenly he straightened up, and then reached over and gave Emilio, the boy who was rowing, a nudge in the back. He held water, and we listened, almost under the stern of the vessel.

I can make myself fairly well understood in Spanish, but when they throw it at me in lumps, I can't

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hold it at all. Brown had studied art in Europe, and I don't know where Boles picked up his Spanish, but both of them could chin like natives.

Our boat slipped silently up to the brig, and Brown reached out and held the heel of the brig's rudder, which was out of water, as she was light. The voices pattered steadily along, and I guessed from the way Brown would listen, and then shoot a look at Emilio, that something interesting was in the wind.

We must have hung on there for three-quarters of an hour, and then there came a pause. I saw Brown's hand steal down and slip his revolver out of his pocket; then he silently motioned to Emilio to shove off, which he did quietly enough with the revolver covering the nape of his neck. Brown wouldn't say a word until we were alongside. Then he motioned to Emilio to jump aboard, followed him, and waved him down the fore companionway with his revolver, and then slid the hatch, and bolted it behind him. This done, he walked to the after companionway and called softly to Boles, who came on deck in his pajamas.

"What's up?" he asked, in the quick, aggressive way he had. I don't ever remember having seen Boles sleepy.

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"See that little brig over by the mouth of the cut-off?" said Brown. "Well, we've been eavesdropping under her stern for the last hour or so, and I'm on the inside of a very fine filibustering scheme, generously subscribed to by a lot of the merchants right here in Manila."

"Humph!" said Boles—"when is it coming off?"

"It's under way right now. There's a big steam launch left Hong-Kong to-night, loaded up with Mausers, Remington and Mauser cartridges, and the Lord knows what else, and this brig is to meet her 150 miles due east of Vigan, and run the stuff into a bay near Cabugao."

We were silent for a couple of minutes to let the idea soak in.

"When does the brig go out?" I asked.

"She clears to-morrow for some place in the north—I couldn't learn where."

"Was Emilio with you?" asked Boles quickly.

"Yes—just now he's down forward under lock and key."

"Good!" said Boles. "Well, Knapp——"

"Boles," said I, "you are an Englishman, but Brown and I are Americans, and it seems to me that

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our duty to our country in a case of this sort is imperative. Of course, it is our plain duty to prevent these munitions of war from falling into the hands of the enemies of our flag, but at the same time I see no reason why this cannot be accomplished in a manner profitable to us. We have got the information, and we ought to be the ones to profit by it. I calculate we can handle this thing without any help from anyone, and I claim that if we do——”

“Sh-h-h—not so loud!” said Boles, in that aggravating way of his; “no need to get mad about it—no one’s contradicting you.”

That’s always the way with Boles. If you get a good line of argument he gets sort of jealous, and tries to blanket you. It always put me out to be interrupted, but I guess that perhaps I was talking a little loud.

“Now, just shut up till I get through,” said I, “and then you can heave on your jaw-tackle for a while. We haven’t reported our arrival yet, and the best thing that we can do is to light right out for the neighbourhood of Cubagao, and hang around off there until this hooker turns up with the contraband. Then we’ll just waltz in with our little ensign at our peak,

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and annex it in the name of the United States of America."

"And then?" asked Boles.

"Oh, well," said I; "if we run all the risk in getting the stuff, I calculate we're the ones entitled to it, ain't we?"

"The quartermaster would probably make a different calculation," said Boles, "but we can run it right back to—no, damn it, we can't do that, either—what the devil *could* we do with it?" He tugged away at his moustache, and scowled at the deck. Suddenly he looked up.

"Suppose we just stow it away, and trade it off little by little?"

I brought my fist down on the hatch with a bang.

"No, by Gosh!—d'ye think I'd let one cartridge fall into these niggers' hands to wipe out the life of one American soldier? I'd scuttle this darn wagon first with all on board."

Boles laughed his hard little laugh.

"Let the eagle scream. No, friend Jordan—that wasn't my idea at all. Why can't we trade it outside of the Philippines—in Polynesia?"

## OFF LUZON

"It goes against my grain," said I, "to put weapons into the hands of savages of any kind."

"It seems to me you fellows are taking a lot for granted," Brown cut in; "don't you suppose a crew in charge of a cargo like that would be a pretty mean gang to handle? There are only three of us, and it's not likely our Filipino crew would give us a lot of help."

"Right O!" said Boles; "we'd need another man or two, and I know right where to get them. But see here. Do you know what that filibuster will be sure to have that's easier to handle than guns, cartridges, and canned goods? No?—well, I'll tell you. *Money!* Drafts on the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, against silver deposited to the credit of Aggie's army, and as good as gold—or half as good. It's a sure thing—if we can only find it. To hell with your Mausers, we'll give them to the mermaids. Now, boys, this schooner will sail three times 'round that double-ender over there, between here and Vigan, and we've got time enough, so to-morrow we'll just clear for Hong-Kong, ship a couple of beach-combing acquaintances, and hang around Cabugao for a few days. Of course, it won't do to let our



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with it I could feel my throat itch from ear to ear, and little Brown's hair pushed his painting cap right up in the air, but from the way his eyes began to glitter I could see that his good sense was leaving him.

When Boles got through we were silent for a minute. Then he spoke in that cool, aggravating way of his, with never a change to his voice when he should have been down on his knees praying the Lord to vouchsafe him a little horse sense.

"Well, gentlemen," says he, "what's the verdict?"

I poured out a stiff drink of gin, and lit my pipe. While I was slowly blowing out the match, I made up my mind.

"I'm game," said I; "I'm a gol-darned fool—but I'm game."

"It's up to you, Brown," said Boles. "Before you answer I just want to say that my advice to you is *not* to come in. Knapp and I need the money. You've a nice little independent income, and there's no reason why you should take a long shot like this. If you——"

"Doctor Boles," said Brown, his voice so husky that he could hardly get out the words, "I've sailed with you and Knapp for about five months, now, and

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"I've never stood shy yet, have I? I don't see why—less you th—you're afraid that I may fail you en——"

I saw that he was just on the ragged edge of breaking down, so I gave him a slap on the shoulder that knocked him clean up against the after bulkhead.

"You're all right, Brownie—the doc's going to apologise; let's get under way." I chased him up through the hatch, and a half-hour later we were beating down the bay towards Corregidor.

About halfway down we rounded up, let our anchor go, and dropped our sails. We took turns standing watch that night, but I don't think that any of us got much sleep. About ten o'clock the following morning we sighted the brig coming out, and an hour later she passed us where we lay at anchor. The difference between a Filipino coasting brigantine and an island schooner is about five knots an hour in a ten-knot breeze, so we were in no great hurry to get after her, especially as we knew her course and destination, so we did not make sail until she was a mere speck down the bay towards Corregidor. Then we got under way, and once within earshot of Merivalles Mountain broke out our kites and tacked down to overhaul her before sundown.

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All that day we stood after her, and it was amazing to see how slowly we gained, in spite of the way we were slipping through the water, but by five o'clock we had them close aboard and to leeward. By that time, of course, they guessed that we had some particular interest in them, and twice they altered their course to make sure. We were very much relieved to see only two white men on her decks, and we felt pretty sure that if there were any more, curiosity would have brought them up. Boles had harangued our sailors, and as they were all Macabebes, and hostile to the Tagallos, we decided to trust them, especially after promising them a magnificent reward if we were successful.

As we drew in on them, Boles took the wheel himself, and as soon as we were within hailing distance, ordered them to heave to, which, rather to our surprise, they did in silence, probably awed by our khaki clothes and blue flannel shirts. There was a bit of a sea on, but we laid her alongside without any trouble, Emilio taking the wheel, and we three standing by with our rifles handy. As we crashed together, Boles and Brown leaped onto her decks, while I stood by the wheel.

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In a minute our boys had made us fast and got in our headsails. The two men on the quarter-deck of the little brig watched the whole thing in sullen silence, scowling and muttering to one another. The brig's native crew gathered forward in a little clump, jabbering among themselves. I guessed that they knew nothing about the real object of the expedition, and looked on the whole thing as another instance of American insanity.

Boles stepped up to the captain, his rifle in the crook of his elbow.

"Go aboard the schooner," he said, waving his hand toward me.

"But why?—we are peaceful traders. I can show you my papers."

"I will see them later—just now *go!*"

An ugly look came into the man's eyes, and for a moment he hesitated. Boles' grip tightened on the stock, and he started to raise the rifle, but the men walked to the gunwale, and, watching their chance, leaped across.

"Watch those chaps," said Boles, and dove down the companionway. A minute later he came on deck. He jumped aboard the schooner, and laid his rifle on

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the deck beside me. Then he drew his heavy revolver and turned to the captain of the brig.

"I will give you five minutes to get me the papers that you have for the people on the launch which you are going to meet. If you fail to get them in that time, you are a dead man. All of your plans are known, and there is an American gunboat ready to meet the launch as soon as she arrives from Hong-Kong. Now come with me, and remember that your life is at stake."

The Spaniard turned white as a sheet.

"But there are no papers, señor," he gasped. "It was thought better not to have them."

"That is a pity, for now you must die," said Boles; "but I think you lie. If it is true that you have no papers, how are the others to know that you are the ones whom they seek?"

"Ah, señor, the captain of the launch is my old comrade, Juan Gomez, and when we drew near we were to fly a small white flag from our peak."

Boles tugged at his moustache for a moment. Then his face hardened.

"I will question you and this other man separately in the cabin, and if what you say does not agree, or if

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when we meet the gunboat I find that you have been telling lies, you shall both surely die. On the other hand, if you tell the truth, I will promise that you shall go free, and your vessel will not be confiscated."

"Ah, the señor captain is very good. We will tell all that we know, especially now that all is lost."

They went below, and in about half an hour the captain came on deck again, and the other man went down. In a few minutes he also came up, followed by Boles.

"They tell a straight enough story," he said. "It's just as I thought. They're only chartered for the job. Beyond that they've no interest in the thing. And there is some money coming aboard."

"What 'll we do with them now?" I asked.

"That's the question. It was my idea to keep them with us till we got almost up there, and then cut away their sticks, and turn them loose to get back the best way they could. But that seems rather tough. I believe I'll just order them to keep by us for another twenty-four hours, and then tell them to clear out. That 'll prevent them from flagging the launch by cable, if by any chance she hasn't left Hong-Kong. They'll be only too glad to clear out. They're satisfied that the whole game is up."

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“Ain’t they any way leary of us?” I asked.

“No—they think that we’re just sent out as bait to make extra sure. That idea of the gunboat was an inspiration.”

The scheme seemed a good one, so we just acted on it. The men were tickled to death to get out of it so easy, and we gave them a drink in the cabin and sent them back aboard their brig, pleased as could be.

We had to shorten sail so as not to run away from them, and all that night they hung on so close that I thought once or twice they might foul us. The weather kept fair, and on the second day after, as we were getting up near the rendezvous, we hailed them and told them to go back, and that the less they said the less chance there was of their getting in trouble. Two hours later they were hull down to the southwest.

For three days we lay waiting around the place of rendezvous, and I must say that, except for one week when I had the neuralgia from driving the workmen on a high trestle in the winter, it was the most miserable seventy-two hours of my life. ‘Boles didn’t seem to mind it, but I was afraid that little Brown was going to have nervous prostration. He never painted a single lick, which was a mighty bad sign.

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On the morning of the fourth day I happened to be on deck. Boles and Brown were below playing cribbage. We were dead becalmed, which doesn't often happen in the China Sea, and as I threw my eyes to the westward, suddenly a column of black smoke over the horizon shot straight up into the air. My heart gave a big jump, and then I lit my pipe so as to get myself together before Boles and Brown came on deck. As soon as I was able to raise her hull over the sky-line I jumped up the fore rigging with a binocular and made her out. She was the filibuster all right, and coming as if she'd been delayed on the street and was afraid she might miss her date. Then I called Boles and Brown. Now that the suspense was over and the time for action come, we all took a brace. I ran up our little white rag to the peak, and then we just stood and watched, and all that you could hear was the gurgle of my old brier and the smack in the water when I sucked in a mouthful of nicotine in my excitement.

Up she came, and we saw that she was a launch of perhaps sixty or eighty tons, and all housed in forward with rough, unplanned planks to stand the sea. In the cockpit aft there were half a dozen or so of men,



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and there was no telling how many more might be down in the cabin.

She ran up almost alongside of us, and not more than fifty feet away, and then the bell rang and her propeller sucked the water back under her stern. A moment later she was lolling idly in the sea, while a dozen binoculars were playing over us from stem to stern, and my skin itched under the scrutiny. Boles calmly picked up a glass and returned the stare. Brown's teeth went through the stem of his old pipe, and it fell on the deck with a crack that made us jump.

A voice in Spanish hailed us from the launch.

"What vessel is that? Where are you bound?"

"This is the schooner *Kaiulani* of Manila," answered Boles. "Is Captain Juan Gomez aboard that launch?"

A grizzled old Spanish shellback stuck his head out from behind the "buffalo."

"I am Captain Gomez. Who are you?"

"My name is John Rogers. I have a message to you from your friend Captain Velasquez, of the brig *Torreador*."

All of the men looked at one another. Then a thick

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voice hailed us in a peremptory sort of way that brought up my dander.

“Who the devil are *you*, anyway?”

Boles answered easily: “We are Englishmen, and we’ve been trading around the islands. Five days ago we were lying in Manila, and old Velasquez, whom I know pretty well, came off aboard and told me that he thought he was being watched, and offered to turn this job over to me. I was to let him know the next day, but he didn’t show up, so we just slipped quietly out, and here we are. We’ll run your stuff if you want us to, but you’ll have to bid up, as it’s a dangerous job. Only yesterday a gunboat passed us close aboard, northward bound: probably Aparri. She may be back any minute.”

There was a hurried consultation, then the thick voice called out:

“How much do you want?”

“One thousand pesos,” answered Boles.

“You take advantage of our position—we will give you three hundred.”

“Take it or leave it,” said Boles

There was another pow-wow for a moment. Then the man called out:

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"All right—it's a go."

"You darned idiot," I thought to myself; "what trusting kids you must reckon we are to think that we'd ever see that thousand!"

Boles waved his hand to the boys forward.

"Stand by to take a line. Get those fenders over—all right, haul away." We had dropped down our sails when we had first made out the launch.

Five of the men on the launch came aboard at once. One was a Spaniard, two seemed to be mestizos, and of the other two one was a German and the other, I regret to say, had "American" written all over him. One of the mestizos carried a heavy, brass-bound box, and I had hard work to keep from giving Boles a wink when I saw it. But we were all in the devil of a hurry now, as a gunboat was liable to slip up at any moment, and in that case we would all have had a trick at polishing pearl shells in Bilibid for a good while.

Boles took the officers down into the cabin, and soon I heard laughter and the clinking of glasses. It must have been a relief to get off that miserable two-by-six launch and get a chance to turn around.

We rigged a whip from the springstay, and it didn't take long to transfer the junk. There were

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ten boxes of rifles, and box after box of ammunition—also a lot of American flour and a good supply of American canned beef and beans. In an hour's time we had it all stowed and the hatches down again, and a half-hour later the launch was on her way to Manila, empty and innocent.

The following morning at daybreak we picked up the land: Badoc Island according to Boles' calculations. Our passengers were down below, but awake. Only the German was on deck. Boles said to me:

“Making poor time—eh?” That was the signal.

“She's sort o' logy this morning, Brown,” I called.

Brown was up forward. When he heard me he came aft and took the wheel, as white as a sheet. The German noticed it.

“*Mein Gott!*—vos you sick al——” Then his own face went plaster-coloured and his jaw dropped, for he was looking down the muzzle of the rifle that Boles had hauled from under the dinghy.

It was my turn then, and I must say that I really enjoyed this part of it, and couldn't help rubbing it in a bit. I picked my weapon, a double-barrelled shotgun full of slugs, from under the whaleboat, and

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walked to the after companionway. I threw the sliding-hatch back with a slam that shook the deck and sat myself down on the top of the ladder, the shotgun under my arm and covering the whole bunch. I knew of course that they were all armed, but I had the drop, and the moral effect of a shotgun is worth a barrel of revolvers.

"*Bueno, señors,*" said I, and I couldn't for the life of me keep a grin off my face. "Savvy—hold up? No savvy? Here, you," I said to the American, "tell these gents. *Thr'up yer hands!*" I roared with a yell that almost knocked him over, for I had seen one arm drop stealthily down behind him.

His arms went up with a jerk,—luckily for him,—and none too soon. As it was, for a moment I thought that he was going up. The others were scared to death. I called Emilio and sent him down to go through their pockets. He brought an arsenal on deck with him.

"There's an outrigger coming off," sung out Brown all at once.

"Drop your forestaysail," Boles called forward. The iron rings jingled down the stay.

"Get in your jib. Leggo your foresheet. Down

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helm, Brown, chuck her up!—steady—steady—keep her there. Now get that whaleboat over—so.”

Then to the German: “Get in that boat—I’ll give her to you as a little token of esteem. Up ye come there—into the boat with ye!”

A madder crowd of men than went over the side of that schooner I never in my life have seen.

“Shove off,” called Boles down the barrel of his rifle.

“But where will we go,” wailed the Spaniard.

“To hell for all I care,” said Boles. There’s Cubugao right ahead of you—nice place. Hard up, Brown—steady. *Adios, señors!*”

We looked at one another, then had a handshake all ’round.

“Well, Knapp?” said Boles.

“Well, doc,” said I, “the whole thing was so darnation easy that I’m almost afraid that it wasn’t honest!”

## THE TREASURE BOX

**W**E had just got back to Manila after a three-weeks' cruise to the southward, and for the first time since we had been trading around the islands had made a "broken trip"; that is, the net receipts had not covered the running expenses.

Knapp and Boles, who owned the schooner, were fairly disgusted, but, as far as I was concerned, the trip had been a great success. This was due to the fact that one evening while becalmed off Dumaguete I had caught on my canvas a certain effect of the short-lived tropic afterglow for which I had been striving in vain for months. There is, near the equator, a certain indescribable effect of clear, starry night creeping over the earth even while it is still daylight, and almost before one has come to realise that the sun has set: not the usual pale-starred, indigo effect of the sky, but a sense of deep, brooding night that is most subtle and peculiarly hard to catch owing to its shortness of duration. On this trip I felt that I had caught it absolutely, and that I had amongst my studies the

## THE TREASURE BOX

component parts of a great canvas ; a supposition, by the way, that time has substantiated, for it was from these studies that my Academy picture, " Moonrise in the Tropics," was developed.

The morning after we got back Knapp and I had gone ashore on our usual tour of inspection, which included a visit to " The Senate," a drive around Malate, tiffin at the Oriente, and the usual Luneta promenade late in the afternoon. We had worked our way along the line as far as the hotel, and were just entering when Knapp gave a sharp tug to my sleeve.

I looked around, and there was a sight to be lingered on by one just down from deep waters. An equipage such as one seldom sees in the Philippines was drawing up to the curb. Harnessed to a stylish but diminutive cabriolet were two wicked, spirited, little jet-black stallions, snapping and pawing, and switching their tails. On the box were a coachman and a groom, both Tagals, and resplendent in liveries of white duck, with scarlet facings and silver buttons. Their trousers ended halfway down the bare leg in a broad, scarlet cuff, and they wore white top-hats, with a scarlet cockade. The harness was brass-mounted, and the reins were white.



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Notwithstanding the brilliance of the setting, our eyes were quickly drawn to the jewel within. Reclining upon cushions of pongee silk was a woman of such audacious beauty that merely to glance at her was like a rebuke. She was of the conspicuous Irish type: the combination of blue-grey eyes, black lashes, and a wavy mass of blue-black hair, with high natural colouring, and one of those superbly conspicuous figures which are a menace to society in any part of the world. To describe her gown would be beyond an artist; it would require a woman, or a society reporter. My tropic sunsets were not a circumstance to it for colour and chromatic variation. It left an impression of Oriental richness and splendour combined with European pattern and design, but no *couturière* of East or West was equal to the task of holding the eye of the observer to the gown when there was such a pair of eyes above it. The last artistic touch was in the form of a clay-faced little Chinese maid that sat beside her.

I was the first to recover, and managed to rouse Knapp.

“God-all-sufficiency!” said he, “ain’t she a pippin?”

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The carriage drew up and the lady descended and brushed past us without a glance. We followed her dazedly into the hotel, breathing an atmosphere of ambrosia. Judging such propinquity to be unsettling to Knapp, I drew him into the billiard room.

We had been playing but a few minutes when I heard a rustle behind me, and, looking around, I saw to my surprise that the woman was standing by the door, talking to the Spanish manager. As I glanced up I caught her eye, and felt in some way that they were talking about Knapp and me.

When she saw that I had noticed her, she turned away and a few minutes later the Spaniard, whom we knew, came in and began to talk to us, telling the latest news, and asking us about our last cruise. As we were about to leave he asked in Spanish:

“Where are you lying now?”

“Same old place,” said I, “over behind the break-water near the *Diamante* moorings.”

“Going to be there long?” he asked.

“Couple of days,” I answered.

As we went out we saw him putting the “pippin” into her carriage. She drove off, and the manager came over to where we stood.

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"Mrs. Hunter asks if you will be so kind as to give this note to Captain Boles when you go aboard," said he.

"Certainly," I answered, in surprise—"but who is Mrs. Hunter?"

"The lady who just drove away, señor."

Knapp looked at me and whistled. "The darn old fox!" he said, then turning to the Spaniard, "Won't one of his partners do, Gomez?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. "The señor can see that it is sealed and addressed to *el capitan*."

For all of his force of character, Knapp was as curious as a cat—curious in a silly way, too, about trifling things that were none of his business.

"Come on, Brownie," said he, grabbing me by the arm, "let's get out aboard."

"You go—if you're in such a hurry to play messenger boy for Boles. I am out for a time of my own!" That straightened him out.

When we got aboard that night, I gave Boles the note, and Knapp gave him the particulars, which were more interesting, as the note simply requested him to call on the sender at the hotel the following afternoon. Boles looked puzzled; then so annoyed that Knapp

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kindly volunteered to take his place. Knowing something of Boles' past, I could understand his reluctance. After a few minutes' thought, however, he thanked Knapp somewhat sarcastically, and said that he would keep the engagement himself.

When he returned, two hours later, he wore a peculiar smile which broadened when he caught sight of Knapp's expression of polite and sympathetic interest. Motioning to us to follow him, he walked aft.

"Well, boys," he said, "I won't keep you in suspense. Strange as it may seem it was something more potent than old acquaintance or fatal charm which led to this appointment. It's a business proposition, and you can have it just as I got it.

"Several months ago there was a certain Volunteer regiment stationed at Mataborong in Mindanao. When they took the place, a lieutenant-man named Durand, in kicking out some loose masonry from the edge of a loophole which had been knocked in the wall of the cathedral, came upon a brass-bound box. He got rid of his men on some pretext, and stowed the box away for the time being. That night he got hold of a canoe and paddled his loot over to an island about a

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mile off shore, where he buried it, making a careful chart of the surroundings.

“ Two days later the padre came to him, and, after some preamble, politely accused him of having looted the treasure, which had been hidden in the masonry of the cathedral. Durand, with equal courtesy, politely denied the charge, but asked for a description of the treasure that he might make every effort to recover it. A lengthy discussion brought out the facts that the box contained pearls and gold to the value of many thousand pesos. The pearls, it seems, had come by a series of thefts from our English friends in Sulu, passing in turn through the hands of first the divers, next that Malayan-Chino-Visayan mestizo crook in Jolo, from whom they were stolen by a trader, who was swindled out of them by the presidente of Mataborong, who is a very superior and enlightened man. The padre, learning of the transaction, relieved the presidente of this dangerous wealth for his soul's health, but without his knowledge. The gold is the result of a joint thievery of even more ancient and venerable dignity, carried on by the padre and the presidente, and ultimately acquired by the former without his partner's knowledge and consent.

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“ The irony of fate sent Durand on a hike with his company the very next day, and before he got back his leg was broken by a Remington, and he was sent up to Manila, where he was in hospital three months. During his convalescence he got a month’s furlough, and went up to Yokohama, where he met Mrs. Hunter, to whom, in a moment of folly, he told the story of his loot of the box. They came back to Manila together on the *Esmeralda* from Hong-Kong, and must have had some little unpleasantness on the way, to judge from her manner in speaking of him. As soon as Durand reported, he was ordered immediately to Calamba, leaving the same day.

“ Mrs. Hunter, it seems, has in some way got a copy of Durand’s chart. She justly claims that the game is a crooked one all the way through; that Durand was the last one to steal the loot, and she in turn proposes to steal it from Durand. She claims, with some ingenuity, that her ethical point is the strongest yet, as all is fair in love and war, which gives her a double claim. However, since Durand is apt to go after the chest at almost any time, she has got to do her part of the stealing pretty quickly, if she is going to do it at all, and as she seems to have

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heard of us in some way or other, she wants to charter the schooner to go after the loot. I told her that I'd give her an answer this afternoon. Now what d'ye say?"

We were silent for fully five minutes, then suddenly Knapp hit the heavy skylight a blow with his fist that made it rattle. The dull look went out of his eyes, and the dark lines at the corners of his mouth deepened.

"I don't like it!" he growled; "we've been mixed up in some fairly crooked deals, but so far we haven't done anyone dirt that didn't deserve it. This poor cuss of a lieutenant has stumbled on a pretty little piece of loot; then he had the hard luck to get winged before he could pack it off. This black-eyed lady works the Delilah racket on him, and learns the combination of the safe. She had a nerve, anyway!" He turned to Boles: "What right had she to think that we mightn't get in line and hold *her* up for the loot?"

"She was frank enough about that," said Boles. "She had to take a chance anyway, and I fancy she's no fool. She just sized me up, and then gambled on my not being quite low enough for that. Also she intends to go with us."

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There came a sudden flash in Knapp's cold grey eyes, and a quick flush glowed under his yellow tan.

"She does, hey—she knows her business all right-O! We'd have about thirty cents of that money when she hit the beach again. What did she offer, anyway?"

"An even half. Pretty clever—what? And I greatly misdoubt the entire truth of her statements in regard to locality and so forth."

"Look here," I suggested, "that lieutenant-man will never get a chance to go down there after his loot, and even if he did it would probably cost him as much as it was worth. Let's make the lady agree to a division into thirds: one to her, one to the boat, and one to the 'luff.' After we get the treasure, if we decide that he is getting too much or too little out of it, we can arrange it accordingly. *He'll* be in no position to kick!"

They thought this proposition over for a few minutes, and finally decided that it was fair enough, and as good as any other. As the lady had said, the thing was crooked all the way through at best.

Boles went ashore the following morning, and arranged it with Mrs. Hunter, and about one o'clock they came off aboard. I saw at a glance that she



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would make a jolly shipmate, and I really believe that the lark of the whole adventure appealed to her far more than the treasure itself. Everything about our little packet seemed to interest and please her, and when she saw the efforts that Knapp and I had made to make her stateroom bright and attractive, she seemed very appreciative.

We weighed anchor that night as soon as it grew dark, and morning found us well out in the China Sea, as we were going around into the Sulu Sea through the Apo West Passage. The weather was good, but the breezes light and fickle, and the third day out found us still beating back and forth off the Sultana Bank.

Early in the afternoon of the fourth day we sighted Mataborong, and by eight o'clock had dropped anchor off the east end of the island, where, according to the chart, the treasure was hid. Our object was to get the box and get away undisturbed, so Boles, Mrs. Hunter, and I went ashore at once, leaving Knapp in charge of the schooner. We had no difficulty whatever in following the directions of the chart, as it was very simple, consisting only of a rough sketch of the island, which showed three little prom-

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ontories on the eastern end. On one of these there was a circle marked "tree," on the south side of which there ran a dotted line marked "50—due S."; at the end of the line there was an "X," which we took to indicate the location of the box.

Emilio rowed us in, and on landing we started for the end of the island, where there was the only palm tree in the immediate neighbourhood. The chart made the island to be about three miles long by about one mile in width, but it seemed considerably larger than that. It was just a big sandbar covered by a tangle of vegetation, and in shape rather like the back of an animal. Along the higher ground in the middle there ran a scattering palm grove which gradually thinned out at the end, leaving the tree designated in the chart standing like a lonely sentinel.

The tide was dropping, and our impatience had reached such a fever by the time that we struck the beach that we simply hauled the dinghy high and dry on the beach and left her.

We all knew the map by heart, and, the moment we set foot on shore, started almost on a run for the solitary palm. It was a good deal farther back than it looked to be from the sea, but by making a détour

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along the edge of the beach we finally reached it without having to cut through the brush.

Boles whipped out his pocket compass and got a range due south from the tree, while I got out a tape and laid off fifty feet. Rather to my surprise it took me right into the middle of a little patch of thick bushes that looked like rhododendron.

"This isn't right!" I called to Boles. "These bushes have never been disturbed in the last three months!"

"Oh, you can't tell," answered Boles; "these tropical plants grow fast, and he might have sunk his loot in there on purpose. Let's try it anyway."

We probed the sandy soil here and there with a long iron rod which we had brought for the purpose, and wherever it struck a firm resistance for a couple of feet we dug. After about an hour's vain effort, in which we had probed and rooted all over an area of about ten feet square, we paused, and I for one had a cold, leaden weight of disappointment under my ribs. Our hands, tough as they were from handling ropes and spars, were sore, and in places blistered, and the sweat was running from us in little streams. Disconsolately we sat down for a moment's breathing space.

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Mrs. Hunter had worked as hard and as silently as we, and now sat on the sand with her arms clasped about her knees and her great dark eyes brooding out over the sea. Suddenly she sprang to her feet.

"Oh, sillies!—sillies!" she called to us mockingly, and flew back to the palm tree. The next moment she was pacing toward us in long rhythmic strides, her eyes sparkling, and a derisive smile on her silently moving lips.

For a moment we looked at her amazed, with the vague idea that she had an attack of the sun. Then, together, we caught the reason of it all, and with a wild whoop sprang to our feet.

"We're a gallus team of treasure hunters!" said Boles. "I wonder how jolly long it would take us to find a lump of loot that was really hidden. Any ass might have known that the chart meant *paces*, not feet—as if a man alone in the dead of night was going to get out his yardstick and lay it off——"

A clear and triumphant call from the lady interrupted our count, and we broke into a run. She was executing a Spanish dance around a small washed-out heap of sand and shells. We bawled at Emilio to

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bring the tools, and in the meantime attacked the hummock with hand and foot.

Two minutes' hard digging, and we had unearthed a brass-bound camphor-wood chest, about two feet by one by one. A sudden silence fell upon us all.

"Let's open it!" whispered our Pandora.

"No!" said Boles, "let's get it aboard and get out as quick as we can."

Staggering under the weight of the little chest, which was delightfully heavy, we hurried back to the beach—then paused in consternation.

"Why, where's the boat?" cried Mrs. Hunter.

In silence we made our way to where we had left the dinghy. Not a trace of her was visible. The tide had receded several feet down the gradual slope, but not even so much of our boat was to be seen as the furrow that her keel must have made when we hauled her up. On hands and knees we went over the beach inch by inch, but absolutely unrewarded by the slightest hint or clue.

Jordan Knapp can tell the rest of the yarn better than I can.

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### II

After the rest of the people had shoved off to go ashore and look for the treasure box, I got out the glass and watched them until they had landed and disappeared around the point. Then I went up to the maintop and looked the whole island over, but there was nothing in sight, so after a bit I got tired and came down. I was all alone aboard except for a little Tagal that we'd shipped as cook, but all that he could cook was rice and fish, and he couldn't cook that without burning it, so we'd just put him at odd jobs, scraping and painting and cleaning, and the like. I judged that someone ought to be on lookout, so I called him aft.

"Take this glass, you scrub," said I, "and shin up topside and keep your lamps glued on that beach, and if you see anything but sand and water, sing out. If you drop that glass," said I, as I stood in the companionway, "I'll hang ye by your feet from the cross-trees, and leave ye there till they drop off!" It's always a good plan to be firm with these natives.

It was mighty tiresome for me, so I went down below and read a book called "Lured Away," but it

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didn't interest me much, and pretty soon I closed my eyes, and just rested a bit. The next thing I heard was the Filipino kid squalling out from the top. I got up and went on deck.

"What is it?" said I, sort of put out at being disturbed.

He jabbered away and pointed to the shore. I looked over there and saw that the people had got in the boat and were pulling down the beach. A ways down they landed, and began to haul the boat up into the bushes. I could just make out three of them, so I judged that Emilio was on lookout.

That brought me up all standing, for I guessed they'd run up against something they hadn't counted on, but I reckoned they were in no danger, as otherwise they'd have pulled right off aboard; still, I didn't like it for a cent. Thinks I, they've seen some natives paddling along and are waiting for them to clear out.

I waited and waited, but nothing came in sight, so after about an hour I went below again, telling the kid up aloft to keep his eyes peeled or I'd peel them for him with my jack-knife. In a little while he sings out again, and going on deck I saw that all four of

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them had come back to where they had landed first off. They walked around a bit, and then went up and sat down in the shade of the bushes.

That puzzled me some, but I reckoned that they were waiting for dark for some reason before they came off. The sun was setting then, and as I judged they'd be hungry when they came aboard I started to get supper.

While I was messing around the galley I began to get dissatisfied. There was something sort of mysterious about it all that I didn't like, and their waiting on the beach about a mile above where they had hid the boat puzzled me. I called up the little Filipino cuss and tried to question him, but his monkey talk was more than I could savvy, so I gave him a cuff alongside the head, and told him to swing the riding light.

The night came down dark and gloomy, and still they didn't come aboard. Here and there on the mainland a little light would sparkle out, and then disappear. I got right nervous and depressed. I hated to leave the schooner unprotected, so pretty soon I called the cub aft and told him to get in the gig and pull in and see what was up. We could see the island shin-



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ing in the starlight, and I had no fear of his clearing out, as he was too homesick for the Pasig.

After he'd gone I got the blues so bad that I began to set the supper table in the cabin, and while I was doing it I heard the boat come up alongside. Although I was naturally dying to know if they had got the loot all right, by that time I was too put out with them to let on, so I just kept on what I was doing in a dignified sort of way. I heard them walking around on deck, and wondered why in thunder they didn't come below. Finally I couldn't stand it any longer, and started up to tell them what I thought of the whole business.

I came up on the jump, and then as I struck the deck stopped short. In the glimmer of the riding light three rifles were covering me; two shoved almost in my face, and one pointed at my stomach.

"Throw up your hands!" said a sharp voice.

There wasn't anything else much to do, so up went my paws, and for a minute I stood paralysed with surprise.

"Who in hell are you?" said I, when I got my breath back.

"Never you mind, my man," said the same voice,

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which I made out to come from a tall chap dressed in khakis, "you just keep your hands up and your mouth shut, and you'll save us both trouble!"

Somehow I suspicioned who the fellow was, although where he came from beat me, so I chirped out:

"If you're Lieutenant Durand there's no call to get so peevish about it all—we're calculating to give you your share——"

He interrupted me with a short, snappy laugh.

"Ho!" said he, "*my share!* That's damn good—why, you bloomin' pirate, what's the matter with it *all* being my share? What business have *you* got prowlin' around my loot, anyway?"

"Oh, I don't know," said I, "it's pretty much the same business that you and the padre and the presidente and the rest of the crowd have been promoting. But look here, Mr. Durand, suppose you make up your mind what you're going to do with me—my arms are getting right tired!"

He spoke to one of the other fellows, who stepped up and pawed me over a bit. Then he told me to put my arms behind me, which I did, although for a minute I was half minded to swing around and make a fight for it. It would have done no good, as the other

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two had the drop on me, and they didn't look like the kind who would take any chances.

The little fellow who corded me up knew his business all right, and when he got through with me I could hardly wiggle my shoulders. They whispered together a bit, and I leaned back against the after end of the house and tried to make out their faces in the dim light. Pretty soon the little stout chap dropped over the side and handed a big bundle up to one of the others. As they dropped it on the deck I saw that it was my Filipino brat, gagged and bound.

The little man stayed in the boat, and in a moment shoved off and started to pull in toward the shore, and as he got clear of the side I noticed that he was towing a boat. That startled me, and I turned to Durand.

"Look here, mister," said I, "do you mind telling a fellow whether his mates are all right?"

"Oh, no," said he, careless; "now that we've got all the trumps, I don't know as it does any harm for you to see our hand—got anything to smoke?"

"A-plenty," said I; "just take a look below and you'll find all the comforts of a home—table set and supper waiting, pancakes getting cold. I'll thank

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ye to bring me up a cigar when you come if you'll be so kind!"

He laughed and went below, and in a minute came up with a bowl of rice and some canned things. From the way he and his mate sailed into the chow I judged that they must have been on short rations for a while.

"Look here, captain," said he, when finally he'd got filled up chock-a-block, "you've entertained us so handsomely that I don't mind telling you a few things. You seem to know all about the loot, but you probably *didn't* know that I started after it myself from Zamboanga three days ago. I took this gentleman here into partnership, and we got a little schooner and sailed around here, and would have got the box and cleared the day before yesterday, but we were foolish enough to leave the boat with no one aboard but the crew, and they had quietly vamoosed."

"That was a fool trick on your part," said I, mighty interested. "So you've put in the last two days on that island!"

"Yes—eating cocoanuts and fish."

"But how about the loot?" I asked.

"Oh, that's coming. I had the pleasure of watching your people kindly digging up 'my share' for

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me this afternoon. We didn't take the trouble, as there seemed no way of getting it off."

Things began to clear up, although that didn't make me feel any happier.

"Then it was you fellows that swiped the boat and hid it down the beach?" said I.

"Just so—taking care to wipe out our tracks."

I thought it over a bit. "Well," said I at last, "I may be thick, but I'll be darned if I can see just where you hold *all* the cards; it seems to me that the box is the boss trump, and from what I know of my crowd there'll be quite some playing before they throw it down. Look here," said I, turning to him, "do you think this darn box is worth our murdering each other about? You can't get it away without our schooner, and you won't get it without a fight to start with. Why can't we come to a divvy on it? We've admitted your right to a third of it——"

He cut in with that sarcastic laugh of his.

"You're right, captain—the box isn't worth killing anyone over, but I'm counting on getting it without any scrap. My Spanish friend here," he nodded at the man beside him, "was for shooting your people down from the bushes this afternoon, but I wouldn't

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near of it. I've sent their boat in, and they'll find it in the morning and come off aboard. Then there'll be another little surprise party. I don't think they'll be so foolish as to fight when they get alongside and find three rifles looking at 'em."

I saw his plan then, and I must say it made me respect him a lot.

"What's the matter with our peaching when we get back?" said I.

"It wouldn't do you any good,—just get you in trouble,—besides, I don't mind paying you what's fair for the use of your schooner. But I just want to warn you that if you try to sing out when they came off aboard it will be mighty unhealthy for you!" There was such an ugly snap in his voice as he said this that I sort of calculated that he was right.

We changed the subject then, and he told me some mighty interesting things about his experiences, and I spun a yarn or two myself. Pretty soon the other fellow came back in the dinghy, and Durand introduced him to me. Somehow I couldn't help liking Durand, but at the same time I was scheming about some way to get on top again.

About midnight we went below, the little fellow

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staying on lookout. I lay down on a locker, and Durand sat at the table and had a drink with the Spaniard, who, it seems, was the captain of the little schooner they had come to the island in, and seemed right ugly at losing his vessel. He had no idea of what would become of her, but seemed to think that the Filipino crew would strip her and leave her somewhere.

The night wore along, and by-and-bye I woke up from a little nap and saw a faint glimmer of light in the skylight. A few minutes later Durand, who was on deck, stuck his head down through the hatch.

"I think I hear them coming!" said he.

The little fellow came over to me, and examined my fastenings. They were taut enough, the Lord knows, and even if they had come loose I was so stiff that I don't think I could have moved my arms.

"Now, captain," said he, "just you keep quiet—and remember that while we don't want to hurt you, business is business"—and I saw that he meant it too.

It was mighty disagreeable for me, waiting there and seeing everything working right into their hands, but there was no help for it, and I couldn't help grinning a little to myself when I thought of Boles' sur-

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prise. I agreed with Durand that they would never be so foolish as to try to put up a fight when they found that the people on the schooner had the drop.

The glimmer in the skylight grew brighter, and then suddenly I heard a hail from close alongside. I recognised Brown's voice.

"Schooner aho-o-oy!—Oh, Jordan!—Aho-o-oy!"

Something scraped along the deck over my head, and I heard Durand say: "Lie down—flat behind the bullarks!" The squat little fellow stuck his head down through the hatch, gave me a look as I lay on the locker, and softly slapped the butt of his rifle in a way that I understood.

Brown hollered a few times more, and then I caught the chunk of rowlocks. They must have been very close, for presently I heard Boles say, "The addle-headed ass has finally decided to go in and look for us and taken the boy with him,"—then I lost what he said, but presently I heard him growling away again,—"or else he's caulked off down below waiting for us to wake him up with the pleasing news that he's a man of independent means——"

Funny how a little thing like that will sometimes



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irritate a man, especially when it's so unjust. That bit of lip almost reconciled me to the surprise they were going to get.

There was a moment's silence, and I heard the boat jar up alongside—then came a piercing scream and a roar of voices all together.

“Hell!” roared Boles; then—bang!—bang! Two reports came almost together.

There was another scream, and I heard Boles roar out:

“Drop that gun!—drop it, woman!”

There was another report, and I felt the cold sweat break out all over me.

“Stop firing!” yelled Durand's voice. “Stop it, you damn greaser!”

“O Lord!” I groaned to myself. “That's rotten murder! Oh, if I was only loose!”

I put out every ounce of strength that was in me, but the coir rope was too strong. The squat little cuss looked down into the cabin.

“Lie still!” he bawled; “no one's hurt. That cat tried to shoot Durand, and the greaser took a shot at her, but Durand knocked his rifle up. It's all right—lie still, d'ye hear?”

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"Oh, you cursed devils!" I blubbered, for I thought that he was lying.

"Oh, shut up, you blithering idiot!" he snarled.  
"No one's hurt, I tell ye!"

Durand stuck his head into the hatchway.

"Come up, captain!" he ordered, and as well as I was able I wriggled onto my feet and went up.

Standing close together by the bullarks was Durand and his two partners, rifles in hand. Just the heads of the people in the boat were in sight, and I don't think I ever saw an uglier look than was on Boles' face.

"Get in the boat!" said Durand sharply to me. He was a tall, handsome man as I saw him in broad daylight, but I wasn't admiring his beauty much just then.

"Almighty!" said I; "you aint a-going to leave us on that island are you, lieutenant?" What I wanted was to gain time.

"Yes, I am!" says he; "and a damn good place for three cursed pirates and a ——"

I think that it was the word he called the lady that settled it. Quick as a flash I leaped behind him and planted my heel in the small of his back. At the same

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time I drove my head against the shoulder of the little man and butted him over the side as clean as a whistle.

What followed happened too quick for words. Durand landed across the gunnle of the boat and tore away the whole strip, and the little fellow, when he found himself going, leaped clear of the boat and swashed overboard. The greaser whipped around at me with his rifle and I ducked just in time, for his bullet creased my scalp from front to rear. Before he could shoot again Boles was up over the side and jammed him in the jaw with his fist, knocking him clean across the deck. His rifle went spinning out of his hands, and quick as a flash Boles had whipped it up and sent a bullet through his head.

In the boat, little Brown had jumped Durand and shoved his head back over the splintered gunnle until it was in the water, and Emilio was on his feet and stabbing at the swimming man with the boat hook, but fortunately couldn't reach him.

"Cut me loose—damn ye, cut me loose!" I yelled, for a man with his hands tied behind his back is in poor shape for a general knock-down and drag-out.

"Humph, you're so handy with your feet, as the Irishman says, that there doesn't seem to be much

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need!" says Boles, in that aggravating way of his, but before I could think up any curse strong enough for him that wouldn't shock the lady, she had yanked out a little knife and cut me loose.

"Brown," said Boles, "let that poor devil up. Do you think that's a nice way to treat an officer and a gentleman?"

"He's trying to pull a gun!" said Brown in a hurt tone.

"Well, pull it for him, and if he gets frisky, clip him over the head with it," said Boles.

I called out to Emilio to come aboard and look after his mate, and, picking up a heavy line, chucked it to the man who was overboard. He grabbed it and I hauled him in and yanked him up over the side.

"Now, young man," said I, "if you think that you can keep quiet and behave yourself, why, all right-O, but if you're still looking for trouble,"—I rubbed my arms where his miserable rope had cut into them,—  
"I'll just try and make you as comfortable on that locker down below as you did me!"

He lay panting and dripping on the deck, too winded to get on his feet and without as much fight in him as a pollywog. Pretty soon he hauled himself

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up. He wasn't a bad-looking young fellow, and I misdoubted that he might be a junior deck officer off some transport and misled by Durand.

"I'm through," says he; "but if there's no hard feeling, matey, I'd like a sup o' that liquor below—if ye can trust me," he added, sort of shamefaced.

"I've no fear," said I. "If I can't look after you and your lieutenant-man, now that I've cast off my warps, it's time I quit. Go on down and get your drink—but just chuck that misguided greaser overboard before you go," said I.

Boles and Brown had got Durand up out of the boat, and he was sitting on the deck with his back against the bullarks mighty white and weak-looking. I reckon the crack he got from my foot and the gunnle of the boat had jarred up his inside some. I looked around for the lady, being curious to see what she'd have to say to him, but she was down in her berth and didn't show up again as long as Durand was aboard.

We made sail and got up our hook, and by nine o'clock were heading for the westward with a fair fresh wind. Not until then did we crack open the treasure box. It was pretty well lined, although the pearls

## THE TREASURE BOX

didn't quite come up to my idea of what they might have been, but altogether we valued the thing at about five thousand dollars American; not much, of course, but worth the trouble we'd been put to.

We opened it up on the quarter-deck, and Boles divided it off into three equal parts; that is, as equal as he could reckon it. Brown and I were mighty interested, but Durand sat right where he was with a sort of pale, contemptuous grin on his face. He was a mighty good-looking fellow, and I felt sort of sorry for him, but when I said I hoped he wasn't badly hurt he just lifted his eyebrows and stuck up his chin in a way that kind of embarrassed me. The little fellow, who had a drink or two more than he needed, just sat on his hunkers and made fun of the treasure until I told him to shut his face.

Boles tore up three little pieces of paper and held them out to me.

"Knapp, you can draw for the lady—it's for choice," says he. I drew the middle size.

"Second choice," says Boles. He held his fist out to the lieutenant.

"What's this damn foolishness?" says Durand in an ugly voice. Boles' eyebrows came together and he

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gave Durand a look that brought the blood into his face.

"It's for your share of the loot, Mr. Officer-man," said he, in that cold voice of his; "of course, if you don't want it you're at perfect liberty to leave it."

Durand's face got redder and redder and he tried to stare Boles out of countenance, but he might just as well have tried it on the Diabutsu Buddha at Kamakura.

"Ho!" said he; "do you mean to say that I come in on this?"

"Of course you do!" said Boles in an impatient voice. "Go ahead and draw and let's get through with it!"

Durand stared at him for a minute and his jaw dropped; then slowly he reached out and took one of the slips.

"First choice," says Boles—"third goes to the ship—not that it makes any difference that I can see."

Durand sort of hesitated, then suddenly he reached out his hand to Boles.

"I've made a mistake—and I want to apologise," says he. "Will you shake hands?"

"With pleasure," says Boles.

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We shook hands all around then, and Durand told the little cuss that he'd see that he didn't lose anything by the trip. Then we all went down and had a drink.

We got off Zamboanga about sundown, and there we put the lieutenant and his mate ashore. His company was there and not in Calamba, and I expect he manufactured some sort of a yarn about his absence. On the way back to Manila the lady didn't have much to say. She left us as soon as we got back, and that's the last I've ever seen of her. She really had nothing to complain of, but I've always had a sneaking notion that she would rather have had one of those shots of hers at Durand find a bull's eye than to collar a baker's dozen treasure boxes.



## BREAK OF THE MONSOON

**T**HERE are a great many better places to be than around the Pellew Islands at the breaking up of the monsoon. If Dr. Boles and Jordan Knapp had only been satisfied with the nice little trade that we were getting in the Philippines, we three might have been together yet. As it is, Boles is annexed; the Lord only knows where poor old Knapp may be; probably resting deep on the rose coral, with his hair ground into the golden sand that carpets the floor of those sunlit seas. As for me, I have been on the wallaby again with palette and brush and inseparable colour-box. My studies were all lost in the wreck,—that is, those in my sketch-book,—but the studies that are still unfaded in head and heart can never be taken from me, and have already, I am told, done much to make me famous as a painter of marines.

It was Dr. Boles who first showed me the folly of trying to express in colours the spirit that I had never felt—the spirit of the sea. It was he who first persuaded me to abandon my futile life of æsthetic indo-

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lence and turn my face to the changing, changeless face of the great Artist whose colours are the elements, and whose canvas the broad face of the waters, with the frame of the heavens circling them about. He showed me indeed how to get the spirit of the sea, but alas! I learned the lesson all too well—for now I have sucked up its restlessness and intolerance of all restraint. Before, I lived in a fool's paradise, happy in my narrow little sphere. Now, I am discontented in a grander one.

As I sit in my little summer studio, way up on Duncansby's Head, and watch the cold grey waters swirling through the Pentland Firth, and, when the night is clear, see the early summer sun dropping redly to its brief resting-place behind the grim "Old Man o' Hoy," my thoughts flit back to those perennial summer seas where day and night are both so sensuously sweet that the great yellow moon can hardly wait for the sun to go below—and is in turn deposed in one quick burst of glory when the night watch is over.

To one fresh from those sparkling waters, it is easy to feel and to express the gloom and bleakness of these grim northern shores. And so my pictures are lauded in Academy and Salon, but, strange to say, the power

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of such praise has gone. Before the masterpieces carried in my mind, those pictures that I spread on canvas are drab and colourless.

In the six months that I had spent cruising around the islands with Knapp and Boles in their little schooner, I had got to know them both better than either knew the other in spite of their former associations. I think that perhaps this was because they were a little critical of one another, each feeling the masterfulness of the other, and neither caring to be dominated. It was this tacit acknowledgment on the part of each of the strength of the other which made them at times so assertive of their own, but to me, of whom God knows they never had the slightest occasion for jealousy, they were always the epitome of kindness. I doubt if there ever lived two men of more heart and less principle. It seemed as if each felt that the world had used him unduly hard—thrown down the gauntlet, so to speak—and they had accepted the challenge; asked no favours, but wrested from their mutual enemy all that they could get. They pretended that this common cause was the tie that had linked their fortunes for so many months, but this, while it may have deceived themselves, failed to deceive me. I could

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see—in fact, had seen—that underneath all of their indifference and coldness there was a powerful tie of affection, such as may exist between two brothers who often quarrel and never approve one another. On our first cruise to Samar, when Boles was so severely wounded by one of the Spanish traders whom we had fooled out of a rich cargo of hemp, Knapp was tremendously overcome, and tended him as a mother would her child—all of which, however, failed to prevent Boles' scathing criticisms of the manner in which he handled or, rather, navigated the schooner; but for once the big Yankee was silent and took all of the bedevilling without a word.

Both men were voluntary exiles: Knapp from a little New England State of the historic shrewdness of whose sons he was a shining exponent, and Boles was from London, that great whirling centre, the centrifugal force of which flings men to so many far corners of the earth. Whatever his past, it was easy to see that he had originally come of thoroughbred stock. Although repeatedly floored by Fortune's buffets he had never lost his poise. As Knapp once said: "If that man Boles didn't have so much sense, there'd be no abiding him."

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Both had confided more or less in me—Knapp more, Boles less. I knew how Knapp had drifted into the East in the interest of an iron construction company which for some reason had lost its interest in him, and I knew that Dr. Boles had once stood high as a surgeon in London; this I discovered accidentally. But it sufficed for me that both were wise in their way, and both were good to me, and long before our last cruise through the bright waters of the Sulu Sea I had learned to love them both. There is a pathos about the hardened, confirmed adventurer, perhaps because of his loneliness—or it may be on account of the feeling that his end will be a tragic one. At any rate, when you have faced death with him and found him stanch, as I have done, it brings him very close.

I have said that my comrades were unprincipled. They were; not, however, in the coarse, selfish, criminal way of brutal high-handedness to be found. I regret to say, in so many of the island traders, but unprincipled from the standpoint of their early associations. Knapp was a rigid New England Congregationalist, and Boles, it is safe to assume, had been educated in the High Church of England; at any rate he once told me that he was a graduate of Oxford.

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Yet not more than a year before I met him he had been engaged in an attempt to smuggle opium into the Philippines, and he and Knapp had been together in another enterprise which, as far as I could make out, was little short of piracy.

But their lack of principle never descended to the plane of low personal conduct. Neither was a drinking man, and once or twice, when the glamour of the East was in danger of anæsthetising my moral senses, Boles had laid a firm detaining hand upon my arm. I was never so sure of Knapp. At the end of a cruise he would sometimes melt away from our sight—nor would we see him again for a couple of days. Where he went we never asked him—nor would he drop a hint by word or sign.

For six months we had plied a legitimate and profitable trade running up and down the islands from Aparri to Sibutu, and in and out to Ilo Ilo, Cebu, Zamboanga, and a score of others, for hemp, tobacco, copra, which was scarce, or anything we might pick up. Once we ran down along the coast of Mindanao and loaded the schooner chock-a-block with curios—odd-shaped knives, spears, and shields, and a few relics of the early Spanish invaders of the island.

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These we sold at a good profit to the tourists beginning to arrive in Manila and to some of the returning officers as well.

At last, when we had grown familiar with the waters, and probably for that very reason, Boles grew discontented and began to talk of pearls and copra to the eastward. Knapp tried to discourage it, and did succeed in staving him off for a month or two, but a couple of poor trips at length sowed the seeds of *his* discontent, which the sight of familiar mountains could never have done. Three weeks later, deep with a cargo of trading junk, a lot of which was brought out for us by a transport-captain friend of Boles, we beat out through the San Bernardino Channel and headed southeast by east.

That night I took the mid-watch. When I came on deck I found that we were becalmed on a gently heaving sea with the land looming blackly on our starboard quarter. Knapp, whom I relieved, was yawning by the wheel, and up in the eyes I could dimly distinguish the huddled figure of one of our Filipino boys who was supposed to be on lookout, but whose attitude suggested oblivion. It struck me that the air was strangely oppressive, but I had not been a sailorman long

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enough to instinctively go and take a look at the glass. Knapp was too sleepy to notice it, and presently I heard his vigorous snores vibrating up the companion.

There seemed to be a little air stirring aloft, for her topsails were drawing slightly and we seemed to keep our steerage way. Usually we furled topsails at night, but Boles had heard of something that made him want to lose no time, so we kept all her rags on her but the staysail.

Before long the little air aloft fell flat, and about the same time the stars went out. The pale glimmer on the face of the compass showed that our head was swinging to the southward, though the helm was hard a-starboard. The feeling of suffocation and high nervous tension which I had noticed when I first came on deck increased until, finally, I was almost ready to scream from the indefinable apprehension that seemed to have suddenly seized me. Weird, phosphorescent flashes seemed to come from the inky water on all sides and the air weighed on my chest like a heavy blanket. Yet, because the sea was still and the night soft and warm, I never thought of the impending evil. Instead, I sat cursing what seemed to me an unmanly



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nervousness and making every effort of will to overcome it.

Finally a new perception brought me up all standing. Leaning idly against the wheel, I happened to cast my eyes aloft to see if I could get a glimpse of a star. I found the star through a little rift in the murk, and getting it in line with the fore shrouds I watched it for a moment to see if we were still swinging.

Then a peculiar thing occurred. The star began slowly to ascend! Puzzling over this phenomenon it seemed to me that my ears caught a dull, growling, muffled roar far astern of us.

Then, all at once, the full reason of these marvels burst upon me, and grabbing a heavy belaying-pin from the collar of the mainmast I thundered on the hatch at the head of the companionway. The vertical movements of the star were caused by a great swell beneath us; an undulation so long that the whole of our little vessel was raised and lowered bodily, and the dull, distant rumble was caused by the crashing of these great smooth seas on the rocks of Batag Island, far astern.

My rough summons had brought all hands from

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their bunks on the jump. Boles gave one look around, then at the compass, and then he ducked down through the hatch for a look at the glass. I heard him give one horror-stricken curse, and the next moment he was flying forward. Our Filipino boys, who knew nothing of barometers, but had the quick instinct of the seagull, were already on deck and frenziedly casting off the maintopsail halliards, anticipating the order. Boles was a dozen men in one incredibly swift-moving body.

“Brown, drop that wheel and get in the jib—quick! Knapp, help ’em with those topsails.” As he shouted he was quickly throwing extra lashings around our whaleboat and dinghy.

“All right—leggo your foresail halliards—on the run. Knapp, get ahold of that foresail reefin’ tackle—haul away, man—make fast. Look sharp there, Brown——” He jumped aft, and with the help of the three Filipinos started to furl the mainsail.

We had swung completely around by this time, so as to head back toward the island of Samar. Out on the bowsprit, with one leg thrown across the spar, the other foot on the starboard bobstay and my arms full of the jib, I was too intent on getting the sail securely

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furled to take much heed of what was going on around me. A roar from Knapp almost knocked me overboard.

“Lay aft, Brown—for your life!”

Looking quickly up, I saw with horror what the flapping of the canvas, as I threw the loose bights in place, had hidden. Between us and the land there had risen a long, uneven line of ghostly white, and as I looked there came the shriek and roar of a loosed inferno. Dropping everything, I came in off that bowsprit like a frightened chimpanzee. Boles and the boys were throwing extra gaskets around the hastily furled mainsail, and Knapp, having hauled taut and belayed the reefing tackle rove through the leech of the foresail, was frantically clawing at the reef pennants and tying them in. Someone had cast the halliards of the forestaysail off the pin and let the sail run, but it had not been furled. I saw that Boles' idea was to let go everything until the first squall blew over, and then to run, or heave her to under the double-reefed foresail. If there had been time he would have gotten in the foresail altogether and set a little storm trysail, but as it was we were too late to secure what we had.

The noise by this time was appalling, but we had

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not felt a breath of wind. The screaming of that gale as it tore at us through that breathless blackness was, without exception, the most nerve-racking torture that I have ever conceived, and I believe that if I had been less actively engaged I might have jumped overboard from sheer panic.

Knapp was not affected this way. He was working against time to save money, and the keen grey eye that he cast ahead was cool and calculating.

"Looks sort o' dusty," he remarked to me as he worked. "Darn it, there's that new forestaysail all over the place—hang on, kid—here she comes."

And come she did. As he talked I could hear the hum of the wind aloft through the rigging; then we felt a quick hot puff and the loose sail forward gave a flap on the deck like a great wounded bird. There came another puff that sent me staggering against the mainmast,—another and still another,—and then all hell broke loose.

Over we went to starboard—over and over and over till we seemed completely on our beam ends, and there we stayed while the deck was awash clean amidships, and the spume and flying spray struck our weather bilge and shot clean over us, making it seem as if we

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were lying under a Niagara. Forward I caught a momentary glimpse of a great struggling balloon as the wind got into the belly of the forestaysail, and the next moment there was a report like a gun and I saw it gyrating to leeward. Following it came a tearing, drumming noise, and all at once the jib, which I had so securely furled, stood out like a great pennant from the bowsprit. Only for a moment and it, too, was gone.

Both topmasts were over the side with a mass of wreckage, and as we righted slightly and backed away before the gale the foresail was lifted clear of the sea enough for the wind to get in it, and then with a sort of double parting salute it took flight. Above the roar of wind and sea, flapping canvas, and ripping cordage, at each consecutive loss I could hear Knapp's strident curses mingled with the blast of the gale. We lay side by side, flat on our faces on the deck, protected by the weather bulwarks, and squeezing the tar out of a runner near at hand.

Looking aft over my shoulder I saw Boles lying on his side on the leeward side of the wheel, which he seemed to be going up hand over hand. His antics were purposeful, for soon the schooner, which had been

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broadside on to the squall, began to pay off and the wind came in on her quarter and then astern. Knapp and I crawled aft. I only saw one native boy where there should have been three. The lives of the others are charged up to the great profit and loss account of the sea.

“Here, Brown,” called Boles, “take the wheel and keep her off before it. Knapp, let’s clear away the wreck.”

For about an hour they worked like beavers while we tore along under bare poles at such a rate of speed as I never expected to attain with everything drawing. Then Boles went below to study the chart. Knapp came and stood beside me, remarking casually that both of our boats had gone to hell, so it would be well to try and keep the schooner afloat if possible. Neither man had said, or ever did say, a word of reproach to me for my neglect in waiting so long before breaking them out.

When Boles came on deck the first thing that he did was to grab the long iron lever of the pump and suck her dry. Apparently we were leaking nothing to speak of. Then he cast a look all around, but there was nothing to see but flying spray.

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"Seems to be going our way," he said, turning to us. "After all it might have been a lot worse. Serves me jolly well right for not looking at the glass before I turned in. Probably wouldn't have made any difference though—that's a rotten barometer. Well, there's two of our crew gone up—or down, rather—too bad—too bad."

"How long are you going to run?" asked Knapp.

"Until daylight anyway. I want to get well clear of that coast in case the wind comes back at us. Did you notice the way that sea was coming in? Looks like wind ahead." Needless to say, this conversation was a series of shouts.

All that night we tore along, and when the morning came it brought little cheer. The sea was getting up wickedly and combing somewhat, which rather puzzled Boles, as he said we must have passed the 2500-fathom line long ago. However, he laid it to the currents.

At nine o'clock we got a scrap of headsail on her to keep her well ahead of the sea, which was beginning to loom up ominously under our stern. Our speed then after this was done became absolutely appalling. I would not have been surprised to have discovered the

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Chilian coast close aboard at any moment. The chaos of sky and swirling waters seemed to have affected my brain, and all sense of fear had long since left me. Instead there was a mad, exhilarating sense of freedom of all restraint, and I wanted to shout and sing. The wind was dead astern of us now and was blowing a steady gale, which occasionally abated slightly, thus giving the sea a chance to rise. A great brimming swell would lift our stern, and for a moment we would seem to pause as if to gather strength while our bows were buried to the hawse-pipes in the green flank of the sea ahead, then the big following sea would slowly creep amidships, the schooner would raise her head, and for a minute we would shoot like an arrow on the very crest of the wave.

These mad leaps ahead, combined with the crash of the foam under our bow; the roar of the gale through our tousled tops, and the hiss of the flying spray about, were perfectly intoxicating. Boles wore a flush in either cheek, and his grey eyes sparkled as he met her wild yaws with a strong and steady twist of the wheel. Even Knapp the practical, the utilitarian, who had but to look aloft to see where the hard dollars had been torn from his grasp, presently threw his big-



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featured, deep-lined visage to the scowling sky and bawled at the top of his lungs:

*"' Oh the Dreadnought was sailin'  
Down the Long Island sho-o-o-r-r-s,  
And the seas from her scuppers  
In torrents did pour-r-r-r-s——'"*

And on the last line of the chantey Boles and I would join in with:

*"' Lord God, let her GO!!'"*

It was a crazy performance for three men in our position, and I know that our poor little remaining Filipino was firmly convinced that the wildness of our surroundings had sent us stark, staring mad.

At midday came the crucial test. Boles decided that we had run as far as was safe, and that if we were going to heave her to at all it would not do to wait much longer. Indeed, as I looked back at the heaving mass of water astern of us, I decided that we had already waited too long, and that we would never live to get her head to that sea. But Boles seemed satisfied, albeit a little anxious.

We set a little leg-o'-mutton ridingsail from the main throat-halliards and lashed it to the main boom,

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which was lashed fore and aft. A little scrap of a storm trysail was rigged from the mainmast to the foot of the foremast, and Knapp stood by to get it up as soon as we got around into the wind. The Filipino boy and I stood by to get in the scrap of headsail as soon as Boles should give the word. I think that that minute's suspense was the worst I have ever had.

Boles stood gripping the wheel in his strong, nervous hands and casting an alert eye over his shoulder for a lull in the sea. Strong, wary, vigilant, with the beautiful outlines of his classic, splendidly developed figure sharply defined through the thin wet linen clothes that clung to limbs and body, he was a sight to hold the artist's eye.

Then as we watched him, waiting for the signal, our hearts in our mouths, a calm seemed to settle on the sea astern. Far in the distance a great billow shot whitely upward—and disappeared again.

“Down jib!—hard a-lee!”

We hauled for our lives, and had the canvas almost in, when suddenly the wretched halliard jammed 'way aloft in the block. I looked around despairingly, and in a bound Knapp was beside me. Together we hove for every pound that was in us, while the gale, catch-

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ing the scrap of sail, paid us off and held us for a moment abeam to wind and sea. Just for a moment, when away came the kink and we piled on one another on the deck. But the mischief was done. Boles, seeing that the delay had lost us our chance to heave her up, clawed his wheel madly back again and tried to get her off before the comber rushing up astern should strike us. And practically he did. But one great mass of dark green water came hurtling at our stern and struck the rudder full, just as it rose. There came a jar as though our stern had dropped upon a rock, and Boles went spinning across the deck as though slung by a giant hand. I grabbed the wheel, but the spokes twirled idly in my hands. Boles was on his feet in an instant.

“Get up that headsail again—quick! Leggo this ridin’s’l! By the ——! now we *have* done it!”

In a minute we had her off before it again, but not till a couple of seas had swept her clean and given us a quick scramble for our lives. And then, as we turned and looked at one another in dismay, a new note in the uproar smote upon our ears. Knapp leaped to the fore rigging and took a long look ahead. Then he slid to the deck, turned, and snapped both

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thumbs above his head, a queer expression on his face.

“Breakers ahead!” he sung out, and added reflectively, “and the rudder gone to hell.”

Boles and I leaped to the main-shrouds and strained our eyes to pierce the veil of flying spray that hung across our bows. Then in a moment it thinned a bit and we caught a glimpse of snow-white tumbling water on the starboard bow. I glanced at the bewildering chaos of mounting waves astern, then at the mad, rioting line of breakers, and for a moment felt the hair bristle on my scalp. But there was little time for idle speculation, which was fortunate, as we were as helpless as a chip in the rapids of the St. Lawrence. Before we had time to recover from the shock we had driven past clear of the shoal and left it on our quarter.

This danger past, our hope revived a bit; then there fell the heaviest blow of all. We tried the pumps and found her leaking badly!

The sea that had carried away our rudder had undoubtedly started something about the stern-post; Boles thought that she was generally strained as well. She seemed to be getting very logy, and now every

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following sea threatened to come crashing over her stern.

Knapp and the boy Emilio were put at the pump and Boles and I managed to get some more headsail on her. It was a precarious job, but we had to have it, both to keep her off before the wind and to keep her ahead of the sea. Boles had considered rigging a sea anchor and dragging out before the gale, but now that she was leaking so badly our only salvation was to try and fetch an island and have it close aboard when the gale broke. And already the glass was rising and there seemed less weight in the wind. But the sea was, if anything, worse.

All that night we slaved away, wet and hungry and, for my part, half dead with fatigue. Emilio had completely given out. Boles and I were hammering and sawing away at a raft, if the worst came to the worst, and steadily through the clatter of our hammers and the crash and seething of dying gale came the "gurgle—chunk, gurgle—chunk" of the pump as Knapp's great tireless frame swung up and down, up and down, hour in and hour out.

Towards morning I shame to say that I collapsed. Thirty-six hours of ceaseless work and anxiety, with

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no sleep and scarcely any food, was hauling the line too taut. I just sat down for a moment to rest, and passed away. Knapp stopped pumping long enough to carry me below like an infant.

When I awoke the sun was streaming down the companionway, and through the hatch I caught a glimpse of the sweetest blue sky I ever saw. Boles was leaning over me with one hand on my chest. Sleepy as I was I could not help noticing the deep lines on either side of his mouth and the dark shadows under his eyes. And then I heard the "gurgle—chunk, gurgle—chunk," that had followed me through my dreams, and knew that poor old Knapp was still swinging away at the pump.

Full of remorse and apologies, I hurried up the ladder, or rather stumbled up, for I was still dazed with sleep. When I struck the deck my eyes popped open wide enough.

Aside from a long, even ground swell, we were in water as smooth as a mill-pond and a soft little breeze was fanning gently abeam, and right ahead and not more than three miles away rose a mountainous island, girt with a snowy zone of gleaming beach. Beyond a promontory a mile to windward I could see

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the uneven horizon that bespoke a heavy swell of which only the skirts reached us. A glance over the side showed me that we had found our lee none too soon. Amidships the deck was not eighteen inches above the water. Boles and Knapp had rigged out a sort of great sweep astern, made from a couple of planks nailed to one of the whaleboat masts. They had set a jib and the riding sail, and under this we were slowly approaching the beach.

"Do you know that island?" I asked Boles.

"Oh, yes," he answered. "It's charted right enough, but not very well recommended as a health resort, I believe——"

"It 'll be a better health resort than this hooker in about another hour," said Knapp. "Here, give me a spell at this pump, kid. Lucky that I was in the milk business once or we'd been on bottom long ago."

"Why didn't you wake me up before?" I asked. "What are we going to do?"

"We couldn't wake you up with a pound of dynamite, and we're going to beach this hooker if we can keep her afloat about half an hour longer," said Knapp.

"Sooner than that," said Boles. "Might as well

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hang her up to dry on that bar ahead—it seems to run all the way along.”

“Let’s get the raft overboard now,” said Knapp. “No use waiting until she strikes, we might get our feet wet.”

The raft at which Boles and I had been at work was completed sufficiently to ferry us and a few of the necessities of life. We slid it over the side, and Emilio jumping down aboard it secured the junk we passed down to him. The pale green water over the bar was not a cable’s length ahead of us when we cast off from the poor little schooner’s side, and a few minutes later the long, low combers were washing her decks.

We managed to paddle ashore without mishap, though it was a very wet and rather precarious passage. Knapp wanted to go back to the schooner and try and rescue some more truck, but Boles dissuaded him, saying that the raft would not live two minutes on the bar. Our experience coming in through the surf seemed to verify this.

We were not a very cheerful party as we sat on the beach and watched our poor little schooner breaking up on the bar. Boles seemed to mind it the least—next to Emilio. He remarked philosophically: “For-



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tune of the sea—poverty at the best, and Davy Jones' locker at the worst." Then he lit his pipe and started down the beach.

Knapp had fallen asleep almost as soon as he struck high-water mark. Emilio was rolling a cigarette and I was lazily watching Boles disappearing in the distance, when suddenly I saw him turn and wave his hands above his head. Though he had told me that the island was not inhabited there was something startling in his gestures, so giving Knapp a dig in the ribs, I picked up a rifle and belt and started down the beach. Then I saw the cause of his excitement.

Around the point a giant swell was thundering up on the beach, and not a mile away, and about a quarter of a mile off the shore, two dismantled masts rose from the churning water. On the beach we could distinguish several moving objects and what seemed to be a sail rigged out as an awning. The barking of a dog came down to us on the breeze.

"Seems to be a popular watering-place," said Boles, turning to me. "Let's go down and pay our respects."

When we were within about half a mile they dis-

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covered us, and for a moment there was great confusion. Then, probably seeing that we were white, they quietly waited our approach. As we drew near, the relief that I had at first felt on seeing that there were other occupants of the island, quickly turned to disgust. Of all the villainous-looking scoundrels that were ever rejected by sea and land the six that defiled that shining stretch of beach left any in that line I have ever seen hull down. Their primary instincts were treachery and deceit. With no earthly reason for doing so they lied to us from the start. First they told us that they were whalers; then seeing Boles glance contemptuously at the slight spars of the wreck, they said that they were trading around the islands. Before we left them they had given us two or three other lines of occupation. The only point on which their stories agreed was that their captain had been washed overboard in the hurricane, and that they had lost their bearings and been cast up on the island the night before. How they had managed to reach the shore was a mystery to me, but I suppose the bar on which their vessel struck had broken the force of the surf. While we were talking Knapp came up, but after he had listened to a fragment of their vile talk

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he turned and went back. Boles and I soon followed him, declining invitations to remain.

"What do you make of that outfit, Boles?" I asked as we were walking back.

"Sea tramps," he answered. "Pearl and seal poachers, black-birders, thieves, and scoundrels in general. They've got a boat there that only needs a little overhauling to make her seaworthy. I hope to the Lord they'll fix her up and clear."

"What chance have we of being taken off?" I asked.

"Oh, we're all right enough. We've got our tools, and when the sea goes down a bit we'll see what we can do with the schooner. If nothing else offers we can get planks enough from her to whack together some sort of a craft that will float us to the Pellews."

That night the mongrel crew from the wreck came over to visit us, and defiled the soft night air for rods around with the reek of their foul mouths. They were all about half-drunk, as they had managed to save a cask of rum from their vessel. One of them, a Cockney gutter-cat, interested me by vigorously insisting that the island was inhabited, swearing with much sulphurous obscenity that he had found by a

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spring not far from our camp the print of a naked foot, which, from its smallness and slenderness, he thought to belong to a woman. That started them off on a line of argument such as in all of my knocking about I had never listened to, and I verily believe that if they had stayed an hour longer I would have run amuck and exterminated some of them as I would a noxious beast. But at last they went, the Cockney swearing that he was going to get up early and try and stalk the owner of the little footprint the following morning.

Knapp and Boles regarded the Cockney's maudlin assertions as the incoherent ravings of an alcoholic intellect, but in some way the story had made an impression on me. Accordingly, the following morning I hunted up the place described, just to satisfy my mind. And well it was that I did so.

I found the spring without any difficulty by following the little stream of crystal water that flowed down across the beach not far from our camp. Where it burst from the mountain side there was quite a good-sized pool, and there, sure enough, in the damp loamy sand that encircled it were the sharp impressions of a dainty foot. What caused me to

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catch my breath with surprise was the fact that it was *not* a native's foot—or, if so, decidedly unlike any that I had ever seen before, as the instep was almost clear of the sand. A further discovery almost paralysed me. I found a place where she had knelt to drink, and there in the mould were the sharp impressions of two rounded knees, and on the brink two shapely hands. Clearly marked across one of the finger prints *was the sharp-cut outline of a ring.*

Quietly I stole away, and ten minutes later had brought Boles with me to the spot. Silently he approached the pool and carefully studied the prints in the sand; then as silently pointed to what my startled eyes had failed to see, the heavy marks of hob-nailed sea boots on the other side of the pool.

Hark!—what was that? From up on the slope above us there rose a scream that clove the hoarse babel of the thundering surf as the cry of an eagle pierces the rumble of the coming storm. Again it rose clear and quavering, then sobbed into silence.

Together we plunged into the jungle, following the only open way. A few minutes later we burst into an open space and stood with thumping hearts and staring eyes.

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Under a frowning ledge of rock there stood a woman, a goddess, a Diana of Hans Makart. A tangled mane of red-gold hair poured across her naked bosom, and a tattered shawl of oriental colours, torn and faded, was caught about one shoulder, and hung in ribbons to her knees. Her beautiful head was thrown well back, while the fire of defiance gleamed from her sparkling blue eyes. In each hand she grasped a rough fragment of rock. Her feet stood in a little pool of blood.

Facing her on either side stood the Cockney and one of his villainous shipmates, half stooping, with hands on knees, and glaring bloodshot eyes. Absorbed in the woman they had brought to bay, they had not heard us, but stood panting like two bloodhounds who have run their prey to earth.

The woman heard us and quickly turned her head. Then, like a flash, the Cockney sprang in and his knotty fingers closed around her marble arm.

I heard a snarl beside me, and in the instant Boles had leaped upon the man, seized him by the throat, torn loose his grasp, and hurled him with a crash against the cliff. Then came the sound of crunching bone, and the woman fell forward. As Boles swung

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round, the other villain had thrown his musket to his shoulder, but before he could aim I had emptied my pistol in his face. Down he went, and as he fell his musket was discharged with a roar that shook the mountain side. But the charge flew high. Gently we raised the woman, and Boles sat down upon the ferns and put her head upon his knee. Her fingers were still clenched on the jagged, bloody mass of stone. I rolled the Cockney over on his back, and Boles reached out and took his wrist. It was pulseless. The other ruffian was lying sprawled out on his face, and I did not take the trouble to look at him. His position was diagnostic.

We made a rough sort of stretcher and carried the girl back to our camp. Aside from a few scratches, and some nasty cuts on her poor little feet, she did not seem to be hurt, but still she remained unconscious. In about an hour her eyes opened, but she seemed delirious, and Boles said that her temperature was rising. A little later she was in a raging fever, and babbled incessantly in some Teuton language that sounded to me like Holland Dutch. We were utterly unable to form any theory as to how she came to be on the island. As may be supposed, Knapp was al-

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most knocked off his feet when we came up the beach with our burden, but I saw his grey eyes gleam for a moment when I told him of how we had left the two on the mountain side.

Late in the afternoon we saw five sombre figures stalking up along the water's edge, casting long shadows on the purpling sands ahead of them. Ominously they walked up to our fire.

The Portuguese spoke in a soft, purring voice, that reminded me of a panther.

"Where are our shipmates, señors—and who is that?" His wicked black eyes flashed across at the woman, who was moaning and muttering. Boles started to speak, but Knapp interrupted him.

"We don't know, and we don't care a damn. Who this woman is, is none of your business—and what's more, we don't like your kind, and I reckon you'd better just keep away from this camp—savvy?"

"Ah!" replied the Portuguese with a wicked smile. "We heard two gun shots a leetle while ago, and——"

"Yes," said Knapp impatiently, "and you'll hear some more gun shots in a minute. Now move on—sneak—and mind ye, if we catch a glimpse of ye



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prowlin' around this camp you'll be shy another ship-mate, savvy?—Now vamoose—*pronto!*” He threw his rifle into the crook of his arm. The men lost no time in going, and slunk down the shore into the gathering shadows.

After they had gone we held a council of war. Knapp was strongly in favour of our helping ourselves to our neighbours' boat, overhauling it, and leaving them on the island until we could make the nearest inhabited island, which was only about one hundred miles away, and send a schooner for them. Boles objected to this plan, saying that it was downright piracy, but I have a strong intuition that he was deterred less from any such scruples than from his unwillingness to subject his patient to the dangers of an open boat. Thereupon Knapp grew silent, but I could see that he was thinking hard.

We stood watches that night, though we had little fear of our neighbours, as our numbers were nearly equal, and we were armed, while Boles was pretty certain that the musket we had brought with us from the dead man on the hillside was probably the only firearm which they possessed.

Knapp was very quiet at breakfast, and soon after-

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wards he picked up his rifle and sauntered down the beach. We asked him where he was going, but he simply said: "To see what that scurvy outfit's up to."

Two hours later, as he did not return, I grew nervous, and, taking a rifle, started after him. A few minutes' walk brought me to the other camp, where a strange comedy was going on.

The surfboat had been hauled up clear of the water and capsised, and over it the four ruffians were working like beavers, while at a little distance stood the huge, gaunt, watchful figure of Jordan Knapp. His rifle was lying in the crook of his elbow, and he was admonishing the workers in profane and strident terms. They, on their part, worked silently, and with a will. A bloody gash over the forehead of one of them bore evidence of insubordination, but the present discipline was excellent. The Portuguese was missing.

Knapp turned to me with a grin.

"I reckon the greaser smelt work in the air," he said. "They don't any of 'em like it too well, but they're doing first-rate for beginners—hey?"

I looked at him amazed.

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"For Heaven's sake, what's the game?" I asked.

"Just this, sonny. Boles doesn't want to take the lady to sea in this crate, and I don't blame him. But there are too many on this island, and the grub can't last forever, so I'm just going to get this yacht in commission, and then these gentlemen and I will take a little cruise to Pauce and send a schooner for the rest of you. You'll have to look after the greaser, but there 're enough of you to do it."

This, then, was his plan. Talk of Yankee daring! Alone in an open boat, a poor navigator, and with four scoundrels who would like nothing better than to knock him in the head and throw him overboard.

I tried to dissuade him, but it was of no use, so I went back and told Boles about it. Rather to my surprise he laughed softly, and smote his thigh with his hand.

"That's Knapp all over. Don't worry, Brown—if anyone can do it he can, and before the day is over that gang will be so scared of him that they won't dare whimper."

"But he's got to sleep," said I.

"No," said Boles, "he can stick it out for twenty-four hours, which he can make it in, easily, with this

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breeze. He'd make the scoundrels row it in that. Trust him."

The work on the boat was finished at sundown, and Emilio and I provisioned her. That night, rifle in hand, I guarded the boat's crew while they slept, that Knapp might slumber deep and long.

At sunrise they embarked, and the tears ran down my cheeks as I wrung the Yankee's great hard hand. Two hours later they had slipped over the horizon, and that is the last that up to this time I have heard or seen of Jordan Knapp, Trader.

Three days later Dr. Boles' patient opened her glorious blue eyes and looked with wonder on the unfamiliar faces around her. Her reason had completely returned, but from the time, six months before, when in the wreck of her father's missionary schooner she had seen her parents and two brothers drowned before her eyes, her mind had remained a blank. She was island-born, her father having been an English missionary, and her mother the daughter of one of the Dutch residents of New Guinea. But of herself and family we spoke little, not wishing to tear open fresh wounds. How she had managed to subsist on the island was a marvel, but, as I have said, she was

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island-born, and there were eggs, shellfish, and fruit in abundance.

The day after Knapp had sailed, the Portuguese came humbly into our camp and begged to be allowed to remain. We let him stay, but I watched him very closely.

Within six weeks a passing vessel sighted our signal of distress and took us off. Long before that time I had discovered that Dr. Boles, the masterful, the fearless adventurer, quondam Master of Arts and F. P. C. S., the hero of countless desperate encounters with men savage and civilised—he who for so many years had carried his life and fortunes on the foresight of his revolver, was doomed at last to defeat at the beautiful hands of an island maid. But she was more than that. She was *the* island maid—the spirit of the islands, the deity of surf and shoal, which both were powerless to harm. Right regally she wore her royal gems. In her eyes was the sublime colour of the ocean where the deep-sea lead drops soundless fathoms, and her hair was the colour of those golden beaches late in the day when the purple shadows fall athwart them from the drooping

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palms—but there the poet speaks rather than the artist.

Sweet their wooing must have been—and wild, for who could listen to words of love where the moonlight flickers through the palms, and fail to feel the heart pound like the crashing surf that, with all its noise and tumult, will never tell to aching hearts the fates of those dear comrades who lie, who knows—a thousand fathoms deep.

## IN THE WHALEBOAT

**B**OLLES and Brown probably swear to this day that it was all my fault that our little schooner got hung up to dry on the reef off Mongir Island. I guess that's right enough, but it has sometimes struck me as kind of funny that whenever anything went wrong it was sure to be my fault, but if a thing turned out right, and we happened to make a pot of money, it was all owing to the foresight of the other fellow. I noticed that they were ready enough to heave up when I pointed out the difference in the profits of a few bales of hemp from Mindanao, and the little schooner's belly full of copra.

Boles hung back a little at first, because it was just at the breaking up of the monsoon, but it didn't need a four-inch hawser to take the strain of him, and as for little Brown, why he towed along as easy as an empty casco.

As luck would have it, we no sooner got well off the east coast of Luzon that we caught one of those whirling-dervish cyclones that spin around on a pivot

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and go ahead like blazes at the same time. The description of those things in the "Law of Storms" always reminded me somehow of the wheels of a sulky; most of the motion is in a circle, but that doesn't prevent them from getting over the ground.

We ran at first, as it seemed to be going our way, but by-and-bye it got so dusty that Boles decided to heave her to. We would have made it all right, but just as we put our helm down to round up our jib down-haul jammed in the block, and before we could get her off again a big brute of a comber whipped the rudder out of her like a coon-cat might snatch the tail out of a hen, and after that it was all up.

Fourteen hours later the poor little packet was lying with a broken back across the reef off Mongir Island, and we were sitting on the hot sand above high-water mark, breathing in the stink of the seaweed, and cussing at our luck until the kick of our curses knocked us flat on our backs and we went to sleep. We needed sleep, too, *I* tell you, because for the last twenty-four hours we had been working the pump-handle like the President at a White House reception.

The island turned out to be a regular stamping



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ground for castaways. In the early part of the same gale that drove us there, a little barky had bounced up on the reef, and there had crawled out of her the scurviest outfit of sea scamps that I ever clapped eyes on. I never knew just what they were in business hours—pirates, most likely. First, they told us that they were whalers; but there was too much of the spars of their vessel sticking up out of the surf to swallow with that lie. Then they said that they were traders, and a few minutes later they forgot all about it and claimed to be pearlers.

Brown has told about how we came to fall foul of each other, and about how I undertook to straighten out the mess. My plan was really simple enough, and would have worked out all right if I'd only used a little common sense. Of course it was plain when they came down the beach that night that they were looking for trouble, and after I had fired them out of our camp I was mightily unsatisfied with the layout; not only because it was plain that they wanted to get square with us for having put two of their shipmates out of commission, but also because I saw the Portuguese's snaky eyes coil around the corners of our money box. I wouldn't have cared even then if it hadn't been

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for the girl, but I hated to think of what might happen to her if that bunch of sea scavengers ever got the under hold of us.

Boles and I had quite an argument about it, and I must say that I was real put out at his pig-headedness; but I suppose that that was where his British blood stuck out. When I found that nothing short of a Morton purchase would ever start him, I did what seemed to me to be the only thing. I just took my gun and went down the beach, and held up those sea-going hoboes and made them mend their boat. I got the drop on four of them; but the worst of the lot, the Portugee, managed to slip away. I'm not sure whether I hit him or not.

That night Brown stood guard over my shanghaied crew of criminals, wreckers, black-birders, or whatever else they were, while I got in a good ten hours' sleep. The next day I piled them into the boat, jumped aboard myself, and we hit the brine, laying a course for the next inhabited island, which was only about a hundred miles away. It was my idea to get hold of some sort of a packet when we got there, and go back after the others, and I took money enough with me to do it.

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There were four of them, and they *were* beauties—of their kind—and each one of a different kind at that. I doubt if one of them had a mother and father of the same race—or of any *one* race, for that matter. I just sized them up at the start as dangerous animals that I must watch the whole time until we reached the next island, which I hoped to do in about twenty-four hours, as we left with a fresh breeze coming in on our starboard quarter.

If the worst came to the worst, I intended to make the scoundrels get out the sweeps and pull, for I knew that if I went to sleep I should never wake again.

Poor little Brown cried when he said good-bye to me as I stepped into the boat and entrenched myself in the stern with the rifle across my knees. Boles waved to me from up the beach, but he couldn't leave the girl long enough to come down and shake hands. No doubt that was all right enough, as she was out of her head with fever, and throwing herself all over the place. I *did* think that he might have got Brown to sit by her for a second, and I must say that it sort of got under my ribs, for while no one knows better than I that Boles has his failings, at the same time we had been shipmates for almost a year, and were pretty

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good friends, when we weren't having some sort of an argument in which Boles showed more than his usual British pig-headedness. I'll just bet that if that girl had been a native woman, or old and ugly instead of the finely built, heavy-maned beauty that she was in spite of her hardships, he would have trusted her to Brown long enough to wish me luck.

That's always the way. Just when you get to sort of like a man, some red-headed girl comes along and—but never mind all that!

Our boat, which was only a small whaleboat, was old and pretty well battered, but she had been a good one in her day, and was built on fine sailing lines. She carried the regular whaleboat rig, which gave her all the sail she wanted, light as she was, with only five men aboard her, and no dunnage to speak of. I had purposely taken only one day's rations, so that the brutes with me would be in as much of a hurry to make the trip as I was. It seemed to me that I had taken every precaution, as the glass was high when we left, and the breeze showed every sign of freshening as the day wore on. There was one thing, however, that I had *not* calculated on; that was the proverbial cunning of the full-blooded mongrel.

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As soon as we were fairly under way, I gave them a little notion of the kind of a race that we were entered for, and what they might expect if they were losers. I don't say that I would have carried out the programme to the letter—but *they* didn't know that. They did know that we had already done for two of their shipmates, for what reasons they could only guess, and not guess very close at that. One of them had already felt the weight of my fist, with 190 pounds of lean New England meat behind it, and I calculated that that would last for twenty-four hours.

"Now then," said I, when we had got clear of the outer line of surf and they had stepped the masts, and shaken the sails out of the clew-lines, "this old box is bound for the next island, about one hundred miles away, and if we don't sight it by daylight there'll be three or four funerals in this one coffin—savvy? I know damn well ye'd like nothing better than to stave my conch with one of those stretchers under your feet, and that's just what I'm here to prevent. I don't trust ye, and if one of ye so much as makes a shady move, he'll lighten ship *pronto!* Moreover, we've grub and water for one day, and it's a long way to the next road-house. *I'm* the only one that

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knows where the island bears, so if by any chance I was to take sick and croak, the rest of ye'd be in bad shape. When we strike the beach, you can take your boat and go to hell—only be careful to wait until we *do* strike the beach. Now you can go to sleep, or smoke, or say your prayers; only just hang on to your jaw-tackle, and save your wind for a white-ash breeze if this one drops—savvy?"

One—the dago I called him—gave an assenting whine. The others turned their backs and lit their pipes.

It wasn't a cheerful yachting party, but as we left the long green sea-miles under our stern, I felt my spirits rising like the glass after the gale is over.

Two of the scoundrels up forward got down under the thwarts and went to sleep, as I thought. That was where I made my mistake. If I had had the sense that the Lord gave a jack rabbit I would have kept them where I could have had my eye on them, so they would have had no chance to cook up any deviltry; but I didn't, and the swash and ripple under our bows as we scudded along drowned their whispers.

Later, to make things worse, I played right into their hands. The breeze had dropped with the sun,

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so I had them clew up the sails, unstep the masts, and lower them down on to the thwarts. You can bet I watched them close enough while they were doing this, and they were careful, too, for they knew that if a man accidentally stepped over the after thwart into the cockpit, he would step overboard the next second.

One of the scoundrels who had been asleep up in the bow was a giant. I expect that his father had probably been a deep-chested bosun on some British ship of the line. His mother might have been anything from an Aleutian Islander to a Terre del Fuegan. I called him aft to stroke, as he had the weight, and seemed to know how to handle an oar. He came with an eagerness that I put down to the magazine rifle across my knee. I didn't know that he'd had his low animal cunning to bear on the problem of how to get that billet all the afternoon.

My bullies settled down to their work with a long, steady swing that it did me good to feel, for mine was a billet to get on a man's nerves after the darkness falls, and through the long mysterious night.

Pipe after pipe I filled, and hour after hour I listened to the suck of the sweeps in the sea, and the chunk-a-chunk in the row-locks, until finally the idea

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seemed to creep into my brain—as crazy ideas will to a man at night in an open boat with no land in sight—that this was eternity, and that through all time we were to pull away in long changeless strokes, over that black, silent water.

Twice I gave them “oars” to rest a bit, and take a bite and a mouthful of water—for an engine won’t run on no fuel—and once I had all hands shift sides. Never a word they spoke, but swung away with such good will that I began to feel myself relax a bit in my hardness to them, and wonder if, perhaps, there wasn’t a spark of good somewhere beneath their rough shells after all.

Toward two in the morning I began to think that the island could not be far away, for it seemed to me that we must have rapped off at least eighty knots in our day’s sail, and since dark, when the breeze dropped, we had been pulling at a three-knot clip. So I told them to take it easy and daylight would see us off the island.

Then I spelled them for a while, letting two pull while the other two caught a nap. And then, at length, the east began to glow, and one by one the stars grew pale. I strained my eyes ahead, and I’ll



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never forget the sinking feeling of those few minutes, when suddenly with a flash of crimson the sun shot up in a cloudless sky, and showed no land in sight.

For a moment I was clean staggered, for the island was a high one, and should have been seen thirty miles away. Then I thought of the cursed currents that suck through those treacherous seas, and wondered how far we could be out of our course. The men seemed as eager as I was, and the bow man was standing on his thwart, studying the sky-line ahead. But nothing came of it, and he turned and looked at me expectantly, as did the others.

Then the trap was sprung. The stroke oar suddenly rose to his feet and pointed over the starboard quarter.

"Land-O," he growled.

I swung around in the stern, with a quick tug at my heart. The next moment a great bulk crashed down on me, and two paws like a gorilla's fastened on my throat. Something flashed in the air—the sun rushed to the zenith at one leap—and then the light went out.

I wasn't adrift very long. The next thing that reminded me of my troubles was the nasty feeling of my

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arms and legs being asleep. I woke to find myself flat on my face in the bottom of the boat, with my arms lashed to a forward, and my feet to an after thwart, so that my back was bent like a swung hammock. Someone, sitting right over my amidships section, was giving a lecture, and once in a while would drive his words home by landing the toe of his boot against my ribs.

“Vy tr-r-row him oudt?” said a voice that I recognised as belonging to the Scandinavian misfit. “I dhink ve mide mage ’im r-r-row.”

“I soy, as we knocks ’im in ’is bloomin’ ’ead, an’ chucks ’is bleedin’ karkis in the — hocean. ’E aint no good to we. Wot’s the use in keepin’ uv ’im?”

“Dutchy right-a. Make-a de Yankee pig-hog pull-a de boat. Suppose he no pull-a?—knock-a de face back!”

This last was from a swarthy little beggar whom I had slated as some sort of a Polynesian, but from the purring malignity of his voice, which I heard now for the first time, I calculated that he must be of the greaser species. For a few minutes there was an argument that was a whole course in deep-sea dialect, but as the majority were in favour of seeing me do a trick

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at the oars, while they sat around and encouraged me by a few ingenious devices of their own, my serious-minded friend was overruled, and finally, with an oath, he whipped out his knife and made a slash at the lanyard around my ankles. Incidentally, the knife bit quite a way into my leg, but I seemed to be the only one that noticed it.

The Scandinavian cut the lashing that bound my hands to the thwart. This freed me, but what with the numbness of my limbs and the thump that I had got on the head, I was, for the time being, paralyzed.

"Come oudt!" says he; "vat's de madder ohf you? You dond vish to vor-r-rk, you——" He got a good fistful of my hair and began to drag me out from under the thwarts. The dago was doing the mahout act along my back with the point of his knife. I've got some of the scars yet.

"Ye lide a gime course, ye sweep," growled the big bruiser, as he reached for the back of my neck and helped to haul me out. "Yon's yer bleedin' island, but cuss me if *you* ever land there, ye scut, without ye beach there wen ye're a bloomin' floater!"

"Take-a de oar—'n both-a han'—give-a-way—so—so."

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They had got me sitting on the second thwart, and the dago shoved one of the big, heavy sweeps into each hand. The Scandinavian had thrown another lashing around my ankles and made it fast through one of the limbers, and not satisfied with that he passed another around my waist. The dago was trying to get up a forced draught by jabbing me in the ribs with the hilt of his knife.

At first I was as stiff as a two-year-old the day after his first run, and I came in for more mauling than I've had to take in all the rest of my life put together, but the pulling was the best thing I could have done to get my hinges in working order, and pretty soon I could feel the strength coming back, and the blood beginning to circulate again.

When they found that their prodding was interfering with my form they quit abusing me, especially as they happened to notice that the chesty brute was getting outside of all the grub in the boat. They wrangled over this for a while like a pack of chow dogs, and when there wasn't any left to wrangle over, one by one they dropped off to sleep.

The island lay right abeam of us when I was bowled over, but was hidden in a light haze on the

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horizon. As I twisted my head around to look at it, I could see that it was a long pull to get there, but that didn't bother me any—my only worry was about getting there at all.

I'm a pretty hopeful sort of a man as a rule, but when I came to overhaul the layout I couldn't help but own that Jordan Knapp had just about swung to the end of his scope, and was pretty apt to come up with a round turn at 'most any second. The whole thing was so plumb discouraging that I wasn't as cut up about it as I would have been if I'd seemed to have even the ghost of a hundred-to-one shot. It wasn't that I minded going so much, although that was bad enough, God knows, but it was the thought of being put out of business by such an all-fired bunch of worm-eaten corby-crows. I *did* hope that Boles would never come to hear of it; it seemed so sort of humiliating. It reminded me of a story I heard once of a fellow who was engineer on the Boston Flyer. He was walking across the yard to go home one night, just after he got in, and was hit and killed by the slow freight. When the boys picked him up he was almost gone, and was just getting himself together to say some beautiful words, but as he looked up he happened to catch

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sight of the freight engineer, whom he knew. That settled it, and his closing remarks were chiefly cuss words.

This all sounds very funny now, but then it was mighty aggravating. The crew, being pretty well used up from pulling all night long, had dropped off to sleep one by one, but the hairy bruiser in the sternsheets lolled back against the tiller, and once in a while would give me a grin that put me in mind of a colt with his ears back; it was so full of cussedness. There was still a great blue swelling over his eye where I had planted my fist two days before, and once in a while he would rub it gently, and look first at me, then over the side.

Whether it was to trick me into bringing things to a head or not, I am sure I don't know, but pretty soon he pretended to be asleep. I was watching him out of the tail of my eye, pulling away evenly all the while, and at the same time overhauling my brain as a machinist goes over his running gear with a hammer, looking for a flaw. The difference was that I found some flaw at every rap. Then suddenly, just as I was about to give it up in disgust, and was making up my mind to try to take what was coming, the way a cap-

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tured Malay pirate takes the Chinese New Year, my heart gave a leap into my throat that almost strangled me. Dead astern and hull down over the horizon, I sighted a sail!

Up to this time I had been more disgusted than scared, on the same principle, I suppose, that a murderer is a heap more frightened on trial in the dock than he is in his cell with the death-watch set, after he's convicted. It's hope more than anything else that sets a man's knees to shaking. From the moment that I sighted that sail all of my feelings changed, and for the first time in my life I knew what the real sickening fear of death was like.

Of course I managed not to let on that I'd sighted anything, and pretty soon the devil in the stern dozed off again, and this time I think that he was really asleep for a few minutes, for he woke up suddenly with a quick start, and the way that his hand flew out to the rifle at his side, as well as the startled look that he threw my way, gave him dead away. I pretended not to notice it, but swung away at the sweeps, and directly his eyes closed again. But somehow I suspected that this nap was all a fake. Now and then I looked past him as indifferently as I could, and saw

## IN THE WHALEBOAT

that the vessel 'way astern was bringing a fresh breeze. Pretty soon the dark blue patch showed distinctly on the thin edge of the horizon.

After that first pang of hopefulness my heart sank again bit by bit, just as the lead-line crawls slowly over the side where the water is very deep. I knew that the breeze was bound to reach us while the vessel was still a long way off, even supposing that her course would have brought her close aboard us, and, at the first puff, my hand would be played out. Besides this, there was the chance of one of them waking up and casting a weather eye along the sky-line; but still they slept, and soon I was able to raise the hull of the vessel, which appeared to be an island schooner—but the blue, dimpling water had filled half the distance between us.

The watchdog in the stern was evidently asleep again, for an uncomfortable-sounding gurgle was coming from his hairy throat with every slow breath,—evidently the genuine article this time—and suddenly, from the sheer knowledge that for the moment no one's eye was on me, a thought shot across my brain like the flash of a meteor through the black night.

Behind me, right within the reach of my arm, the



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Scandinavian was caulked off, and I could see the hilt of his knife sticking out under the skirt of his dirty cotton jumper. It didn't seem possible that I could slip it out, cut my lashings, and clamber aft over all that crowd in time to reach the big fellow before he woke; still if I failed there was still a chance to put up a bit of a fight, and although it would be an uphill game it was a sight better than being butchered in cold blood. If I did miscue, at any rate I could peg out with my dander up.

Softly dropping the oars I half turned on the thwart and, reaching behind me, fumbled gently at the waist of the sleeping man. My fingers found the hilt of the knife by instinct, and with an easy tug it slipped from the sheath and quick as a flash I twisted back, shoved it under my thigh, and swung forward on the sweeps again, but my touch had roused him and with a sleepy grunt he dug his knuckles into his eyes and yawned with a creak like a rusty gate. The others stirred a bit and the helmsman woke with another start.

Then my heart stood still, for the Scandinavian suddenly straightened himself, shaded his eyes with his hand, and took a long look astern. The man in the stern, curious from the intentness of his gaze, twisted

## IN THE WHALEBOAT

around and looked over his shoulder. I slipped the knife from under my thigh, and with two quick slashes cut the ropes around my feet and waist. Almost at the same moment the Scandinavian bellowed "Sail-O," and the others sprang to their feet. But the helmsman swung round, fixed his wicked eyes on me, and softly reached for his rifle.

My time had come. With a yell I sprang suddenly to my feet, and, swinging with all my strength, landed my fist on the side of the Scandinavian's jaw, knocking him clean across the gunnle. The sudden list of the boat threw the others to the same side, and before they could right themselves I leaped square on to the gunnle and clung there, while the green water came pouring into the boat. The next moment we were all struggling in the sea.

Of course, I was the only one expecting it, and besides, the others were sort of logy and thick with sleep. Quick as a cat, when I found myself in the water, I gripped the stem of the boat and swung myself up across her. Once astride the keel I reached down, grabbed up one of the long oars, and, swinging it slantwise, brought it down on the ugly head of the thug that tried to shoot me, who was struggling along-

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side. He gasped once, then sank, and I sat and watched the bubbles coming up and waited for him to rise again and give me a chance for another crack.

All at once, most likely from the sudden reaction that came of knowing that the trumps were in my hands, all of the fight oozed out of me. It would have been dead easy for me to have finished off the others one by one, and they knew it, and there was something sort of pitiful in the scared faces that they turned up at me. A little way off from the boat the old squarehead was swimming for all he was worth, his shoulders humped up like a box-turtle. He was a poor swimmer, and his strokes were getting shorter and quicker and his breath came like a grampus when he breaks.

"Grab the side if you want," I yelled; "I'll not harm ye; but as you love your life, don't try to climb up!"

I doubted that he'd ever reach the boat, but he made it and clung there, eyeing me like a bear in a trap. Then we waited in silence.

Soon the edge of the breeze struck me, and behind it came the schooner, tripping along like a girl going to market. Straight down they came, and soon I knew

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that we were sighted from her decks, for she shifted her course a bit and bore down directly at us.

When close aboard she luffed into the wind, and in a minute over went a surfboat and came bouncing along the rising sea. Then, as she drew near, I knew that I was safe, for in the stern sat O'Connel, whom I had met in Manila not long before we started for the islands.

An hour later, in the cabin of the schooner, I told the whole story over a stiff glass of grog. Although Captain McCree was a good sort enough, I could not persuade him to go back for Boles and the others, as the weather had changed, the glass was falling, and it was at the breaking up of the monsoon. So I did not press it, knowing that my mates were well found in grub, and that I could soon get them taken off.

The schooner was bound for Pulo Anna, and when we reached there I left her and not long after sailed by another vessel for Yap. On the way we touched at the island, but the others had gone.

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

**W**HEN the quick-rising tropic sun had cleft the velvet darkness into long, thin shadows, the Baronet and the Banker found the Countess and the Mate. Already the inquisitive ripples of the rising tide were washing back and forth the skirts of the Countess' pongee gown, now wantonly uncovering the graceful limbs, now deftly smoothing the silk-lace trimmings over the dainty feet, uncertain whether the filmy garment was to be regarded as a vanity or a shroud.

She was lying on her side, with one rounded arm half hidden in a tangled mass of hair that matched the sunrise; the other was clenched in the cold, iron grasp of Jordan Knapp, the mate, whose massive frame was sprawled face downward, his forehead resting on his other hand. Strewn along the beach were fragments of wreckage and the stove-up whaleboat, and all around was the soft, warm desolation of a South Sea isle. A few hundred yards off the beach the giant combers, opalescent in the early dawn, thun-

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

dered across the reef and were shattered into wavelets of fairy hues. Halfway between the reef and the beach the broken water swirled around a slender, tapering topmast, from the truck of which was flying a torn burgee. When the bubbling spume of a breaking wave had passed, there suddenly rose to view the splintered stump of another mast and slack ends of shrouds that writhed around it like sea-snakes.

The Baronet carried a thin plank whittled shovel-wise, the blade of which was frayed and splintered from contact with the hard-packed sand. The Banker carried a large sailor's bandana, caught up at the corners, and bulging from the personal effects that he had taken from the drowned sailors whom they had just interred. When he saw the Countess, a corner of the kerchief slipped from his fingers, and the pitiful little trinkets rolled unheeded across the shining sands.

They tried to pry the Mate's stiffened fingers from their grip, and as they were doing so he suddenly gasped and awoke.

The Baronet handed him a little flask, and the Banker took the woman by the shoulders and dragged her above high-water mark. When he laid her down

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an eyelid fluttered. The Banker with a beating heart filled the hollow of his hands with sea-water. The Mate, leaning on his elbow, watched him sleepily—and divined his intention.

“ Good Lord ! she’s had water enough ; try a little sunshine and whiskey ! ”

“ We thought, of course, you were both drowned,” murmured the Baronet.

“ Thought almost right,” said the Mate ; “ might have been, so far as you were concerned. Why didn’t you wait for her ? ”

“ I don’t know. I don’t remember a great deal of what *did* happen. The boat was sinking as it was—did sink, in fact, before we had taken a dozen strokes,” replied the Baronet, holding the flask to the Countess’ lips.

“ Is *he* dead ? ” she asked feebly.

“ No, dearest ; I am here, safe and sound,” said the Banker soothingly, as he chafed her hands.

“ Oh, you ! I do not mean *you*. I mean that gran’ man who plunge after me as I struggle in the sea. You—you go an’ leave me to perish.”

“ You are unjust, dear. I thought that you were in the boat.”

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

"Ah, yes—when I call to you from the vessel. But I do not ask you this; I ask you if he live?"

"Yes, Celeste, here he is—and none the worse for his ducking," said the Baronet.

"What happiness—*mon Dieu! je suis très fatiguée*. Why I have the so great wish to sleep?" The long lashes drooped drowsily over the deep violet eyes, and a gentle little sigh was lost in the soft breeze that fanned in from the sea.

The Mate, watching her apathetically, roused himself from his lethargy. "Let her sleep right where she is. Give me your coat." The Banker slipped it off, and the Mate folded it and placed it under the Countess' head. She smiled drowsily and reached out a fluttering little hand.

"Ah! it is you—my preserver—*mon cher ami!*"

"There, there; you're all right now. Take a little nap; that's a good girl!" He rose stiffly to his feet and stretched both great arms above his head.

The Baronet looked at him quizzically and smiled.

"Don't you think that you are a little proprietary in your manner, Knapp?" asked the Banker in a sulky voice.

The Mate brought down his arms, threw out his



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chest, and stared at him a moment. The deep lines on his face threw darker shadows, and the heavy brows came together.

“Who’s got a better right?” he growled.

“It seems to me that as I am her *fiancé*——”

“You’re a jim dandy *fiancé*. What made you leave her on the yacht?”

“Oh, well, we won’t argue that point. But inas-much as I am the owner and you——”

“Yes, I am not disputing that the schooner *was* your schooner, nor the mate your mate. But you’ve got no schooner left, and therefore no mate. Savvy?”

“But your pay goes on just the same,” said the Banker.

“Oh, does it? Well, I’m no sea lawyer, and I don’t know whether I’m entitled to any more pay or not; but it seems to me that I *am* entitled to some salvage on this little craft that you abandoned in a sinking condition,” and the Mate jerked his thumb at the Countess.

“Oh, you do, eh? Well, you’d better stick to your pay, young man; it’s more negotiable.”

The Mate studied the sand at his feet thoughtfully. “Got anything to eat?” he asked presently.

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

"One can of biscuits," said the Baronet; "and there's a spring back from the beach a way."

"Good! That's worth more to us than coin—or countesses, just now."

The Mate took a survey of as much of the island as he could see. Then his eyes inventoried the fragments of wreckage along the beach.

"Uninhabited, of course. Wouldn't support a jack-rabbit so far as chow goes. And just about enough flotsam to ferry one away! Gentlemen, the situation has its drawbacks."

"Aw; we have observed that already," drawled the Baronet. "The island goes about as far as you can see in each direction. There is saved from the wreck of the yacht one lady, five men, one can of biscuits, one boat compass, one hatchet, one dipper, a jar of marmalade, and about a dozen matches—besides such uninventoried articles as may be scattered along the beach. Have you—aw—anything to suggest?"

"Darn little," said the Mate, who had finished his survey. "There isn't enough material to work on."

"Shall we carry the Countess to the camp?" asked the Banker.

"Better carry the camp to the Countess," said the

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thing passing gives this island a wide berth on account of the others on either side of us. Now, if we could manage to get to the next island—but I don't quite see how we can." He wandered off down the beach.

When he returned an hour later the Countess and the Banker had joined the group around the fire. There were dark shadows under the eyes of the Countess, but her face was almost childish in its animation.

"Nevair have I taste' a *déjeuner* so good!" she cried, as she set down the shell which contained the last of her "chowder." "Ah! here is my preserver. *Bonjour, m'sieu.* Before I am so *fatiguée* I cannot express my thanks." She rose to her feet and dropped a courtesy, while the vivacity of her features softened for an instant. "And what it is that you have in the *panuela*?" She gathered her skirts in both hands, and thrust out her pretty head inquisitively.

"Something to bring back your strength again, Countess—fresh-laid from our farm," said the Mate. He set down the bundle, out of which rolled several large round eggs.

"Right you are—turtles' eggs, by Jove!" exclaimed the Baronet.

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

When the eggs were cooked and eaten, a better feeling seemed to pervade the castaways. In their hunger none but the economical Jap observed that the Mate ate but one egg.

The Countess dropped off into a doze, and the others soon followed—all but the Mate, who arose and searched the horizon with a cold, grey, anxious eye. Soon he stole away from the others, and prowled the beach, dragging fragments of wreckage away from the reach of the tide, searching shell-heap and riffle for objects of use. His hard face lightened, as, wading waist deep, he dragged from the water the sail of one of the boats and spread it out to dry. Three oars and a bucket were the next treasures. Later, he almost howled with joy as his eye fell upon a mass of cordage and a hatch tarpaulin.

When the others awoke, he set them all to search for turtles' eggs and anything else the grudging sea might give up. The Banker got more joy from finding a water-logged cask than ever the negotiation of a loan had given him, and the Baronet would not have exchanged the sailor's dunnage bag he found for a quarter's rent-roll. The Artist, who said that he did not feel equal to joining in the search, amused the

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Countess by modelling the wet sand into profiles of the others.

Only the little Jap, turn by turn and twist by twist, unravelled long cotton cords from the sail cloth, wove them cunningly into a plaited line, bent a nail from a washed-up box, baited it with a piece of mollusk, and, wading into the sea, soon hooked a large fish of shining hues.

Far away on the horizon a hazy bluish cloud marked the location of an island to the eastward, and later in the day another appeared to the north. These gave foothold to the imagination and robbed the sea of its apparent loneliness. The Countess felt that but for these islands she would go mad from fear and desolation. But she prattled joyously, and praised the others for their finds.

When the shoal-green of the sea turned to deep ultramarine and the golden sands began to purple, they dined upon the rest of the eggs—and cautiously upon the fish, for tropic sea-food is sometimes better to admire than to eat. The little Jap appeared with two ripe palm-nuts, gleaned from the half-dozen trees upon the island, and none but he appeared once more to notice that the Mate's appetite was not in propor-

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

tion to his efforts. A lean-to was constructed of the tarpaulin, and the dried sail furnished a common coverlet to all but the Countess, for whom the Mate cut off a separate generous slice. The Mate sat with his back to a tree, and fed the fire with tiny scraps of brushwood.

When all were sleeping, the Countess suddenly awoke, chilled to the bone from contact with the cold sand which the sun-warmth had long since left. The fire was almost dead, and beside the smouldering ashes lay Jordan Knapp, face downward, and sleeping heavily. His great shoulders were outlined against the moonlit sky, and as he breathed deeply and silently she could see them rise and fall against the white horizon. As she watched, too cold to move, a shudder shook the great frame; he turned partly on his side, and drew in his limbs to warm his body.

The Countess crept softly out and threw a few sticks on the fire. As she slipped from beneath the edge of her coverlet a dark object across it caught her eye. It was the Mate's coat, and another glance showed her that he slept in his thin shirt, open at the neck.

She picked up the coat and held it over the coals

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of the fire. When it seemed that the heat had penetrated every fibre she spread it gently across the shoulders of the Mate, noticing as she did so that the cotton shirt was clammy from the dew. Almost as the garment touched him the Mate was broad awake, up on one knee, and tense as a forestay.

"Oh! it is you," he whispered, recognising her in the moonlight. "I thought that I was in China again with Boles and that the river pirates—pshaw! I'm half asleep still. What's the matter, Countess?"

"*Dieu!* I have so cold I may not sleep. Perhaps I have sleep enough in the day. What pity I arouse you, *cher ami!* But you shiver in your sleep, and you have put your coat across my knee," she added reproachfully.

"I don't mind the cold," said the Mate almost roughly; "and I ought to have kept the fire up, but I was sort of sleepy, I guess." He was building the feeble flames as he spoke. "I'll make you a comfortable bed to-morrow, Countess, built up off the ground and thatched out with palm leaves. Seems like I might have thought of it before, but I was busy saving junk that we may need."

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"How long you think we must remain on this islan'?" asked the Countess, holding her palms to the growing blaze.

"Not long, I reckon," he answered reassuringly. "We'll start to knock the pieces of the boat together to-morrow, and then we'll work our passage along this chain of islands until we strike an inhabited one. Maue can't be more than three hundred miles to the eastward, and the natives there are friendly."

"But the boat—how without tools may you make him sea-deserving?"

"Seaworthy? Oh, there are nails in the wreckage, and I can chip these shells into tools; and I have my knife."

"It will be a task like 'The Toilers of the Sea.' You have read that book?"

"Yes; but there are several of us, and we have a sail and can wait for a fair wind. It will be easy enough. Don't worry, Countess, you'll be in 'Frisco in a couple of months."

"I do not worry when you are near, J-Jordin Knapp," she added softly.

"That's a brave girl," said the Mate, patting her hand. "Now you must go to sleep again."



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The Countess made no reply, but gazed out over the still, moonlit sea.

The Banker awoke with a gasp. "Are you awake, Knapp?" he asked querulously. "I'm as cold as death. Can't you build up that fire?" He raised himself on his elbow and saw the Countess.

"If you're going to sit up by the fire, Celeste, do you mind if I take your piece of canvas? Who'd ever think that it could be so cold down here in the tropics!" he grumbled. "You know my lungs aren't very strong, Celeste, and the first thing you know I'll be having pneumonia!"

He tugged the scrap of sail partly off the Baronet. "I say, Knapp, just tuck that thing around my feet, will you? I believe I'm going to have a chill! Heat up the rest of that chowder for me, Celeste. Damn the luck, anyway! You bet that the next time I hire any officers for a yacht I'll get men with the proper licenses, and who know their business. It's all your fault, Celeste. If you'd only been content to go right back this never would have happened. Why don't you heat up something, Celeste? Do you want me to have a——"

"*Shut up!*" growled the Mate.

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“Eh! What’s that?”

“Shut up, or I’ll come over there and twist your neck! Savvy?”

“What do you mean? Is that the way——”

“*Shut yer mouth*, d’ye hear? The Countess’s got enough to bother her without your drool!”

The Banker glared across the firelit space, then grumbled off to sleep again. The Countess gazed pensively at the moon, and then turned to the Mate.

He rose suddenly, picked up the Countess’ poor little canvas coverlet and held it to the blaze, then wrapped it gently around her and drew her up to him.

“Put your head on my lap—so. Now turn your back to the fire—so.”

The fire was behind her, and the broad chest of the Mate sheltered her from the night breeze.

“But you—Jordin Knapp—you cannot sleep so!”

“Never fear, child; go to sleep.” His voice was kind, but imperative.

“Ah, *mon ami*, nevair was I so comfortable.” She gave a little sigh, and the eyelids fluttered down. The flames grew brighter.

Soon she slept, and after a little the Mate’s chin

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sank on his chest, and he, too, slept. So until the morning, when the Baronet awoke.

He looked at them keenly in the early dawn, and the smile that parted his patrician lips was not altogether ironical.

## II

A week passed, and no errant sail clove the distant sky-line. The supply of turtles' eggs was gone, and the fish caught by the Jap seemed a very lonely member of his species. The castaways ate but twice a day, and then scantily. The lines under the Countess' eyes deepened, and new ones appeared in the rugged face of the Mate. He made a bold pretence of eating, and only two of the party saw the deception, but as he grew daily more cadaverous his energy seemed to increase. With infinite toil he had chipped some of the broad sea-shells into the semblance of tools—a saw, a chisel, and an adze. Nails were drawn or dug from box and cask, the smashed ends of the boat neatly spliced and caulked with cotton fibres.

On the ninth day a bright idea suddenly seized the

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Baronet. He called the Banker, the Artist, and the Mate aside.

"I say, you chaps, I've been thinking that the grub is getting jolly low, and that the Countess is not getting enough to eat. She's a game little thing; and never whimpers; but she's going downhill fast. We men have got to cut down our rations—what?"

Knapp smiled a tired smile.

"Women don't need as much food as men; anyway. You'll find it in the physiologies," began the Banker.

"You're right, Sir Henry," interrupted the Mate; "we'll make you commissary officer, and let you dole out the chuck."

The Artist nodded a moody assent, and walked off up the beach.

When they had trimmed down the fore and after fragments of the boat all that remained to splice was about four feet of the after, and about the same length of the forward section. At the most, with the greatest economy of their scant material, the boat when completed would not be more than eight feet over all. The peculiar design, after they had pieced the fragments, brought a smile to the lips of the

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Mate, although its size gave him food for reflection.

"Looks like a bait car," he remarked to the Baronet, "or a punch-bowl!"

"Knapp, if you mention that word 'punch' I will attack you with this prehistoric weapon!" replied the Baronet, wielding his neolithic stone maul, made of rounded rock lashed in the end of a cleft stick.

While they worked wearily the Artist suddenly fainted. They carried him into the shade, and the Countess bathed his forehead until consciousness returned. He gazed dreamily up at the sunlight that filtered through the palm leaves over his head in green and yellow bands.

"Countess," he asked, presently, "do you believe in God, and heaven, and all that?"

"*Certainement, mon cher,*" she answered in surprise.

"So do I, and I think that God must have the artistic spark. No one but a great master could get such wonderful symphonies of colour. Just see the play of colour in the surf as it breaks, and consider the accuracy in the values of blues and greens over our heads. Who ever saw a clash or chromatic dis-

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cord in a sunset? Or in wild flowers, or the leaves in the autumn? Yes; God is a great artist and a musician, and all that is broad and comprehensive. Do you suppose that the mind that conceived such wonders could misjudge a motive or direct the destiny of souls by a rule of three? ”

The Countess' violet eyes grew round.

“ Ah! but you must not try to think of such mysteries now. Rest, *mon cher*; sleep, and rest your tired brain! ”

“ I will, soon,” drawled the Artist, and lazily closed his eyes.

That evening the Artist was the life of the whole party. The Mate, who had never approved of him, listened in amazement and joy to his sudden flow of wit and gaiety. Then to the astonishment of all, just as they were about to prepare for sleep he suggested prayers.

“ Ah, yes; let us supplicate *le bon Dieu!* ” exclaimed the Countess.

“ What rot! ” grumbled the Banker.

“ I say, it can't do you any harm, you know! ” said the Baronet, as one inspired by a sudden new idea.

Knapp rose slowly to his feet and took off his cap.

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"Our Father——" he began, and the others joined in; all but the Banker, who took the opportunity to clean the Countess' unfinished shell of chowder.

"The Lord's Prayer doesn't seem to quite fill all of the requirements," cheerfully remarked the Mate when he had finished, "but it's the only one I know; and, after all, the 'daily bread' part is the most important for us."

When they awoke in the morning the Artist was missing. The Countess was the first to find his writing in the sand.

"Dear friends," it read, "this is to apologise for leaving you so abruptly, but I've lost my nerve. Knapp says the boat can only safely carry four—possibly five. The grub is getting low and I'm sick of chowder; besides, my demand is greater than my supply. Love to all. May God bless you, and get you safely out of the mess! *Au revoir.*"

The "*au revoir*" was no sarcasm. Late in the afternoon the Artist returned,—from the sea,—and they found him with his black hair full of sand, and a sea-gull on his chest.

The next day the Mate, with a smile at the Countess, pronounced the boat to be "sea-deserving."

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

Then they spent three days in catching fish, which they dried in the sun. It was easier to catch the fish, now that they had a boat. Several bottles that had washed ashore and the biscuit tin were filled with water from the spring, which day by day was dwindling as the dry season advanced. Another day was spent in waiting for a fair breeze and recaulking the boat.

They towed her to the leeward side of the island, and there the Countess, the Banker, the Baronet, and the Jap embarked. The Baronet kept his face averted, and when he tried to answer a question of the Countess' his voice choked.

"Is it that you have grown fond of this beautiful islan'?" she demanded, half jokingly, half in surprise. "J-J-Jordin, what do you make? Get in the boat!"

"No," said the Mate, "I'm going to stop here until you send a schooner for me. It won't be very long. This tub wouldn't be safe with my extra weight in her when it breezes up this afternoon." He was wading behind the boat, shoving her through the shallows ahead of him. The Countess could not see his face as he was leaning over, the better to throw his weight against the stern.



## SEA SCAMPS

"You're all right now. There's nothing more that I can do. Sir Henry understands about the courses, and as soon as you get clear of the island you can hoist your sail and get a fine fair wind. When you get to Maue you can send a schooner——"

"Celeste, sit down!" snapped the Banker. "You'll upset the boat if you don't look out!"

"Yes; sit down, Celeste," said the Baronet. "We've arranged it all, and it's the best way——"

*Splash!* The Countess had leaped nimbly into the water and was wading, waist deep, back to the beach before the Mate could intercept her.

At the edge of the water she turned.

"And you would leave J-J-Jordin Knapp so—alone, desolated—even as you left me on the vessel? *Mais non!* He have stay by me, an' I will remain with him. Think, *mes amis*, what it would be—*alone* on this terrible islan' at night, with the moaning of the sea!" She burst into a storm of tears.

The Mate turned to her fiercely. "Celeste, do as I tell you! Get in that boat; do you want to make me—— Oh, *go*, for Heaven's sake! Can't you see that you're only making it worse?"

The Banker said nothing.

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

“ I say, do be reasonable ; why do you want to make it so hard for us, Celeste ? ” cried the Baronet, with a queer vibration in his voice.

The drooping head came proudly up. The bare, gleaming arms flashed down and outward. She turned and faced them defiantly, her back to the man she would not desert, her bosom rising and falling. Before her stretched salvation and the sea ; behind, the green walls of her prison. Her thin, tattered gown hung in rags, while at her feet the glowing sands pressed hot kisses where the frail satin slippers had worn away. The rising trade-wind blew her tawny hair about her face.

“ You ask me why I remain ? I tell you. It is because that if I go I am the base ingrate. This man have risked his life for me when his blood run quick, an’ when his life is low he give me his blood, drop by drop. Day by day he starve himself—an’ he think I do not see. Ver’ many times he bring me food an’ say he have eat plenty, but I know it is only his dinner which he save. When I am cold he cover me with his coat an’ shiver ; when I am *triste* he tell me the droll story, an’ say how soon I will be home. An’ now he have put everything of food an’ shelter

## SEA SCAMPS

in the bateau, an'—an' you ask me that I leave him——”

Her voice choked, and she covered her face with her hands.

The Mate dug his foot in the sand, and gnawed the end of his new, bristling moustache.

“Is there any other reason, Celeste?” he asked in a voice like the echo of the surf.

She raised her head, and the sunlight shone on her face. The little hands were tightly clasped.

“Ah, yes; there is more. I have known many men in many country, many who have the wit, the resource, the courage, the heart of gold. But never have I known a man who have them all, as this gran' man; and he has, beside”—she turned and covered her face with her hands—“*mon cœur!*” She sobbed softly.

“Oh, hell!” growled the Banker; “let's go!”

“Good-by, children,” called the Baronet. “We'll have a schooner here for you in a fortnight!”

He dug his oar blade in the hard-packed sand, when suddenly a feeble spark of decency flared up from deep in the Banker's sordid soul.

“If Celeste's not coming, we might leave her a ration,” he muttered.

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

"I say, by Jove! that's so—what?"

"There's some hope for you yet, old man," said the Mate genially to the Banker.

"Who's going to chaperon you two until the schooner comes?" asked the Baronet jocosely.

"This!" said the Mate, in a deep-toned voice. He snapped a cord about his neck and drew forth a heavy golden ring. The blue eyes of the Countess opened wide.

"It was my mother's, Celeste. Will you wear it for me—always?"

She put her hand in his. "Yes, J-J-Jordin Knapp."

The busy little Jap, who had been swabbing the boat dry, leaped to his feet so quickly that he almost had a capsize.

"E-e-e-e — yah!" he squealed, pointing seaward.

The Mate's keen eye was the first to follow the boy's.

"Sail-O!" he roared in a voice that sounded like a cry of pain. Suddenly he threw his hands above his head.

"They've come for us! The other boat's been

## SEA SCAMPS

picked up! What?—what?” He did a beach dance that would shame a cannibal.

The Banker stared out to sea as if uncertain of his part of the play.

Close to the shore the placid waters lay pearly gray, still unawakened in the shadow of the palms. Beyond, the sparkling waves danced sun-kissed and joyous with the life of the growing day. Far on the low horizon a widening band of ultramarine marked the advent of the trade-wind, and over the sky-line a pink puff rose steadily over the ocean's brim.

Larger it grew, coursing in the wake of the breeze, and soon the darker speck that marked the hull appeared. On she came, her topsails shot with the flaming crimson of the sunrise, and soon a snowy streak beneath her forefoot showed each onward rush.

Close grouped, as if to concentrate their sight, they feasted with their eyes until the Countess' grew so dim she could not see. A little sob struggled to escape, and at the sound the Mate and the Banker turned to her. The eyes of the two men met in a look different from that thrown seaward.

“Well,” said the Banker, “there's no need for heroics after all. We'll all go together, and let's

## AT THE LAST OF THE EBB

try to forget this chapter. I say we call everything that's happened on this blooming island off. Celeste, don't cry, my——"

The Mate's arm encircled the Countess. She turned to the Banker.

"Ah, yes, *mon cher!* it shall be as you wish. Everything is off—but the ring!" she added softly, turning to the Mate.

THE END

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